

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District

other names/site number Poverty Hill

2. Location

street & number 4401 Ajax Road; 3412 Pettis Road [n/a] not for publication

city or town St. Joseph [] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Buchanan code 021 zip code 64503

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Claire F. Blackwell, Deputy SHPO Date

Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register☐ See continuation sheet☐ determined eligible for the National Register☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined not eligible for the National Register☐ removed from the National Register☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District

Name of Property

Buchanan County, Missouri

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
		objects
<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

AGRICULTURE/animal facility

FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/agricultural field

AGRICULTURE/animal facility

FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: I-house

OTHER: hall-and-parlor

OTHER: barn

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets.

Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District

Name of Property

Buchanan County, Missouri

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 been requested).
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Ethnic Heritage/European

Period of Significance

c. 1847-1945

Significant Dates

c. 1871

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office Nelson House DOE
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Private collection of Mary Guilmette

4410 Ajax Rd., St. Joseph, MO

Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District

Buchanan County, Missouri

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 177 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	15	344860	4399140
C	15	345155	4398910

	Zone	Easting	Northing
B	15	344950	4399180
D	15	345155	4398310

☒ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Deon Wolfenbarger, Janice Lee

organization Three Gables Preservation date January 11, 1995

street & number 9550 NE Cookingham Drive telephone 816/792-1275

city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64157

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mary Nelson Guilmette

street & number 4401 Ajax Road telephone 816/279-1261

city or town St. Joseph state Missouri zip code 64053

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District
Buchanan County, Missouri

SUMMARY: The Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District is located in St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri, near the city's southern boundaries. It contains two adjoining farmsteads--the Nelson farmstead and the Pettis farmstead--noted for their fertile, rolling soil. The Nelson farmstead is a 150-acre property bounded by Ajax Road on the west and Mansfield Road on the south. There are four contributing resources and two non-contributing resources on the Nelson farmstead: the Nelson farmhouse (contributing building, c. 1871), the root cellar (contributing structure, c. 1871), the agricultural field (contributing site, c. 1847), the Nelson family cemetery (contributing site, c. 1854), a frame garage (non-contributing building, c. 1978), and a metal Butler bin (non-contributing structure, c. 1991). On the twenty-seven-acre Pettis farmstead are four contributing resources, one non-contributing resource, and one ruin (machine shed/garage, not counted, ca. 1910): the Pettis farmhouse (contributing building, c. 1915), the barn (contributing building, c. 1910), the crib/shed (contributing building, c. 1900), the agricultural field (contributing site, c. 1849), and a small metal shed (non-contributing building, 1992). The Pettis farmstead adjoins the Nelson farmstead at its northeast corner, and is bounded by Pettis Road on the east and the Burlington Northern Railroad on the north. Historically and physically associated for nearly one and a half centuries, these farmsteads remain as the last historic operating farmsteads located within the city limits of St. Joseph. The district retains a high degree of integrity of association, feeling, setting, and location; the remaining historic resources retain integrity of design and workmanship as well. A proposed highway project would severely impact the integrity of the district by dividing the Nelson farmstead, separating the farmhouse both physically and visually from the cemetery, and dividing the agricultural field into unplowable triangular sections.

NARRATIVE: The Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District is comprised of the last remaining operating agricultural land associated with the settlement of Norwegian immigrants to Buchanan County. At one time located outside of the city limits, the district is now on the city's southern boundaries. U.S. Interstate 229 is less than one-half mile to the south, and the Burlington Northern Railroad serves as the northern boundary for the Pettis farmstead. The name is derived from the nineteenth century owners, the Norwegian patriarch Peter Nelson and his son-in-law James Pettis. The farms share not only historical associations, but physical as well. The farmsteads share a contiguous border and many similar landscape features. Both farmsteads have rolling topography intersected with small timber-lined creeks. Trees line the north and south boundaries of the Nelson property. On the Pettis property, trees line the roads as well as the fences dividing the various pastures. From an agricultural viewpoint, as well as historical, the land has retained a high degree of

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Buchanan County, Missouri

integrity in location, setting, association, feeling, and materials (soil). The landscape is clearly related to one of the areas of significance - agriculture - due to the agricultural practices which have continued under one family for nearly 150 years.

The Nelson farmstead comprises almost a full quarter section, not including a small ten-acre parcel on its northeast edge. The farmland undulates between two prominent plateaus, with a branch of Whitehead Creek between these plateaus dividing the property north/south. The Nelson farmhouse is located near the center of the farmstead on its highest point. It has a commanding view of the surrounding countryside and the city to the north. On the other ridge at the southeast corner of the property, the view from the Nelson family cemetery focuses to the northwest across the creek, towards the Nelson farmhouse and the city of St. Joseph.

The agricultural field on the Nelson farmstead was first cultivated in the early nineteenth century, prior to the arrival of Peter Nelson with a group of Norwegian immigrants. The rich loess soil has been preserved by conservative farming practices through the generations of Nelson family farmers. More recently, special methods for erosion control which have been promoted by both federal and state programs since 1935 have been implemented. These include contour farming, in which cultivation follows the contours of the sloping lands in order to diminish the runoff of water. These soil conservation techniques have been employed at the Nelson farmstead since the 1970s, resulting in the preservation of the soil quality, which is directly associated with the area of significance. The contour farming methods have had little to no effect on the visual appearance of the land, and have not changed the original topography and water features--the key identifying features of the land (in addition to the soil). In fact, the soil conservation methods have contributed to the preservation of these features. The field is presently divided into sections on which soybeans, corn, and winter wheat are rotated.

The Nelson family cemetery (1854) is located on a hill at the southeast corner of the farmstead, and is visible from the farmhouse. It continues to serve its original function, although the vast majority of burials have occurred at least fifty years or more ago. A tree-lined dirt drive leads approximately two hundred feet from Mansfield Road up to the cemetery gates. The cemetery is approximately 125 feet by 220 feet and is surrounded by a five-foot-high chain-link fence (c. 1940). The headstones range from simple marble tombstones of the mid- to late-1800s to more elaborate polished granite markers from the early to mid-1900s. The seventy-six headstones face east. Numerous inscribed footstones are set at the east ends of some graves or family plots. In addition to the Nelson and Pettis

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surnames, members of the Stinson, Thompson, Weddle, Hoverson, and Spencer families are interred here. These families are connected with Peter Nelson either through birth or by marriage. Three large cedar trees distinguish the cemetery. Hedge apple trees (*Maclura pomifera*) and other volunteer trees line the east fence. The ridge of the cemetery provides a vista of the Nelson farmhouse, farmyard, and St. Joseph. The cemetery retains its integrity of location, setting, association, feeling, and design.

The Nelson farmhouse sits on a hill near the center of the farm, overlooking the agricultural fields and the cemetery to the southeast. Constructed c. 1871, the soft red brick I-house has a one-and-a-half story brick wing on the northeast corner. A one-story, hip roof porch with chamfered wood posts is set within the ell and runs the full length of the north side of the main section. The wood floor of the porch is raised slightly above the ground. The brick walls are laid in common bond and are tinted a dusky red. They are set upon a mortared limestone foundation. The main facade faces south and is five bays wide. The west wall of the wing is three bays and the east wall is two bays. There is a pair of windows on the first floor of the west end of the I-house, and a single window on the corresponding east wall. All fenestrations, except for the upper-story windows in the rear wing, have an arched lintel of radiating brick stretchers. The second-story windows on the rear wing are short, and are engaged below the cornice of the overhanging roof eaves. The remaining windows are four-over-four, double-hung wood sash, many with original panes. The storm windows are modern. All windows have simple stone sills.

There are three entry doors to the first floor. The main entry is centrally located on the south side of the I-house, and leads to the central hall and main staircase. The most frequently used entry is on the east side of the wing, and enters into the kitchen. Another entry is under the porch on the west side of the wing. All entries have a single, fixed-sash, arched transom above and are fitted with modern storm doors.

A cellar has been excavated under the west end of the I-house. The walls are limestone and the floor is concrete. The cellar is reached from the interior under the main staircase, and from the exterior through double cellar doors on the west end of the house.

Both sections of the house have moderately pitched gable roofs with overhanging eaves. There is a plain cornice board under the eaves of the I-house roof. The ridge line of the wing is level with the fascia of the I-house section. There are two interior chimneys in the main section of the house, and a smaller interior chimney on the wing.

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The floorplan of the original house is intact, and all but two rooms retain their original function. The I-house portion has two rooms below and two above, with a central hall containing an open staircase. Doorways to the rear wing are on the north wall of the east rooms in the I-house. Original masonry work on the exterior suggest that the rear wing was constructed at the same time as the I-house section. There are two rooms on the first floor of the wing. The northernmost room, originally the kitchen, now serves as a bathroom, while the southern room is presently the kitchen. A steep enclosed stairway at the northeast corner of the kitchen leads to an upstairs bedroom. The curved plaster walls along this stairway illustrate the difference in wall widths from the first to second floor: the first floor is three bricks deep, and the second is two bricks. The interior retains its original wood floors (in all but the bathrooms and kitchen), simple wood trim, and plaster walls. The house is in excellent condition after an extensive rehabilitation project undertaken by the present owners between 1975 to 1992, and retains its integrity in all areas.

On the east side of the house is a root cellar under a partly raised earth mound. The cellar, thought to have been constructed at the same time of the house, is circular and constructed of brick. The interior walls and ceiling have been stuccoed, and there is a concrete floor. Concrete steps lead down from the heavy, double metal doors (1991). The cellar retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, design, workmanship, and partial integrity of materials. Immediately northeast of the root cellar is a modern wood-frame, double-car garage. The non-contributing garage has a gable roof and vertical wood siding. Garage doors on the north side, with a concrete pad connecting to the gravel drive which leads west from the garage along the north side of the house to Ajax Road. A large metal Butler bin, also non-contributing, is northeast of the garage.

The Pettis farmstead is an irregularly shaped property of approximately twenty-seven acres. The packed-dirt entry drive leads west from Pettis Road, which is approximately two-tenths of a mile south of the Burlington Northern Railroad. The drive crosses over a branch of Whitehead Creek (which runs northwest/southeast through the property) by means of a one-car concrete bridge without rails. The agricultural field north of the driveway is cultivated for crops; the remainder of the property is presently pasture. The pastures are demarcated by historic rolled-wire fencing and a combination of new and old barbed-wire fence. Trees line the historic fence rows, and provide a sense of enclosure which contrasts with the open fields of the Nelson farmstead.

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The Pettis farmhouse (c. 1915) is south of the small bridge.¹ The frame hall-and-parlor house is covered with clapboard siding, and is set on a raised concrete block foundation (not original). It originally had a one-room gable roof addition centered in the rear, giving the house a "T" floorplan. The gable roof over the hall-and-parlor portion has short gable end returns. A room and closet was added to the southeast ell c. 1940, and a porch enclosed in the southwest ell. Both of these additions have shed roofs extending the gable roof of the centered wing. The centered front door has a pedimented portico porch supported by two simple four-by-four wood posts. The windows on the oldest portions of the house are tall, narrow, one-over-one, double-hung wood sash with slightly projecting entablature lintels. The windows on the southeast bedroom are also one-over-one, but are shorter. The enclosed porch has a band of windows over lower vertical board panels, and a screen door on the west side.

The simple interior remains nearly intact. The wood floors are covered with carpet and the plaster walls are wallpapered. The hall-and-parlor rooms have flat wood trim around the windows and doors. Both rooms have a wide baseboard with grooves near the top. The closet in the northwest corner of the front bedroom has a four-panelled door. The rear bedroom and closet have narrower, grooved wood trim around the windows and doors. A five-panelled wood door leads from the kitchen to the enclosed porch. Concrete steps lead from a trap-door on the porch to an excavated basement under a portion of the front parlor.

The large, wood frame Pettis barn is located in a fenced pasture atop a hill, approximately two hundred feet east/southeast of the farmhouse. The two-story barn with vertical wood siding has a metal gable roof with a wrap-around shed roof for bay extensions that run the entire length of the west side and half the length of the north side. Howe scales, c. 1920s, remain in a pit under the shed roof on the northwest corner. The remaining features of the scales consist of a concrete foundation, two metal levers within a pit, and wood runners (the wood deck is no longer extant). Adjacent is a U-shaped brick foundation which formerly held the beam board for the scales (see Figure 4).

The main section of the barn is two-stories, and is almost square in shape. The ridgeline of the gable roof runs north/south, under a central drive. There are large 10' wide door

¹Frank Nelson, a family member, believes the extant farmhouse is the "original" Pettis residence, which would make it an antebellum structure. As noted later, the 1877 *Atlas of Buchanan County* does not support this assertion. A c. 1915 construction date would, however, make the house a late example of the vernacular hall-and-parlor type.

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openings at both the north and south gable ends. A corn crib, with widely spaced horizontal wood slats, is in the northeast corner of the main section of the barn. The crib is approximately 8'x15'. Next to the crib, on the north wall, a ladder leads to what was formerly the hay loft. Presently the barn is open to the roof rafters. A 15' wide bay is on the west side of the main section, and extends the roof plane on that side. There is a 7' opening on the south end of the drive bay. It is believed that this bay may have been used for grain or hay storage. A shorter drive bay is on the northwest corner of the barn, and houses the Howe scales. Full width (12') openings at the east and west ends of this section allowed easy access for grain wagons. The barn is in good condition. A large circular brick well, approximately three feet high with concrete cap, is on the northwest corner of the barn. An adjacent, smaller, circular brick structure, approximately 1.5 feet tall, is associated with the well, but its purpose is unknown.

A wood frame machine building/garage with gable roof (construction date unknown) is located approximately seventy feet northwest of the farmhouse. It has a patchwork of siding on the portions of the building which are standing, but due to its ruinous condition (including a collapsed roof on the north) it is not included in the building count. A wooden outbuilding two hundred feet east of the farmhouse is in deteriorated condition but still houses goats. From physical clues which remain, the frame construction building probably originally served as a corn crib, then was altered to provide small grain storage prior to its recent use for housing small livestock. Its construction date is also unknown, but its form type and size is typical of nineteenth century cribs. However, a conservative estimate is assumed that it was constructed sometime after James A. Pettis received the property (c. 1900). The small rectangular crib/shed has a corrugated metal shed roof with exposed rafters. The wood floor is raised approximately one foot off of the ground, and retains in places an overhanging skirt of metal. This is a characteristic element of early cribs, and was employed to reduce rodent entry. Widely spaced, narrow wood slats, also typical of cribs, remain on the upper portion of the south wall, and on much of the west wall. A door is on the north end of the east wall, and a centered window is under the roof eaves on the south wall.² There is narrow horizontal siding on the exterior of the framing at the east end. The interior of the shed is enclosed with wide flush boards which are visible on the lower portion of the south wall. These flush boards, as well as the raised floors, are typical of granaries.

²The present tenant noted that there was formerly an opening under the centered window.

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A non-contributing metal shed building is located approximately 120 feet south of the crib/shed. It was constructed by the present tenants for their dairy calves. The pasture land on the west, east, and south sides of the farmhouse are enclosed with a variety of wire fencing, much of it historic. Rolled-wire fencing, more typically associated with a farmyard, is on the west side, leading up to a small hill which has flowering trees.

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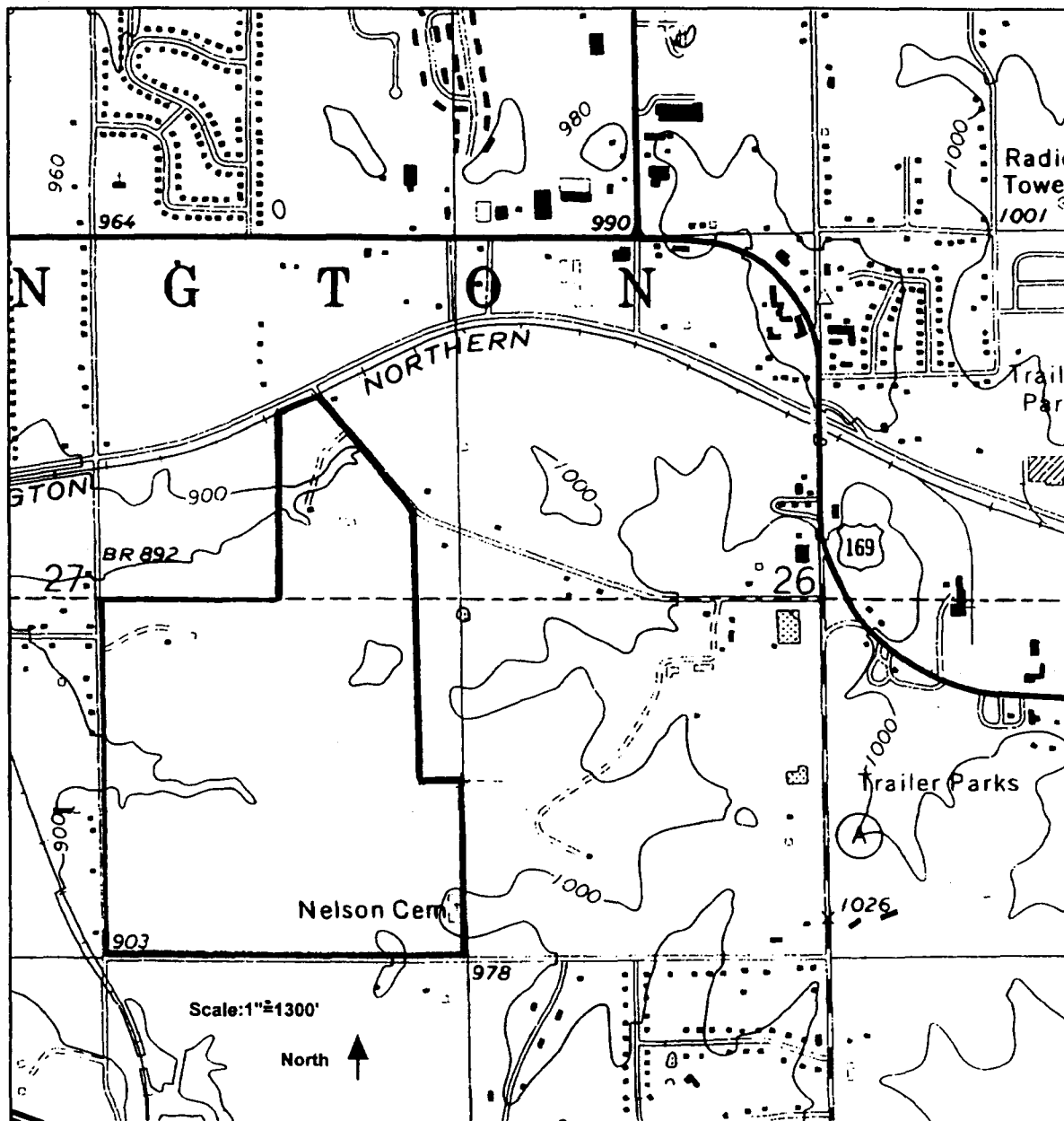


Figure 1. Site Map, Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District

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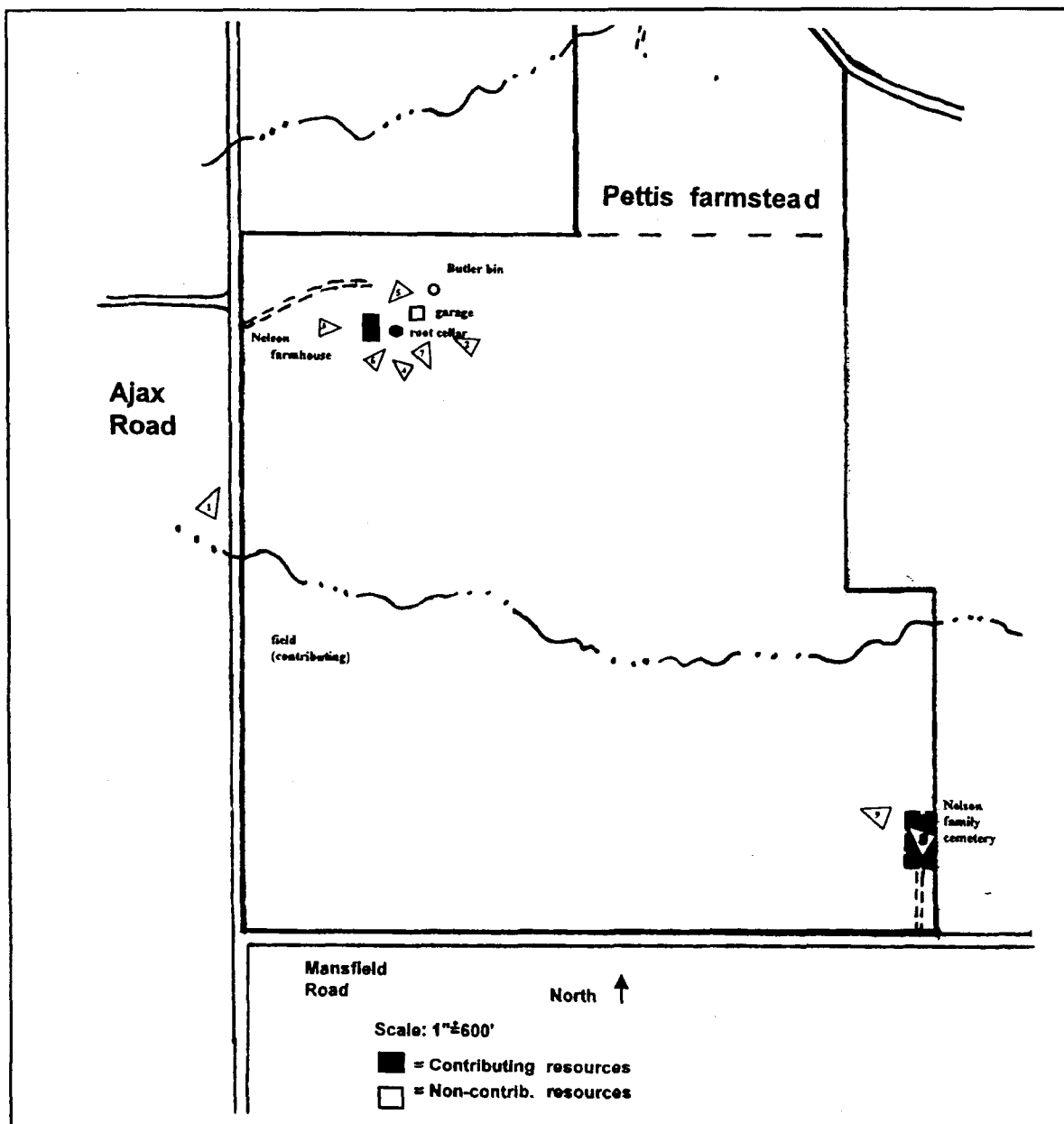


Figure 2. Site and Photo Map--detail, Nelson Farmstead

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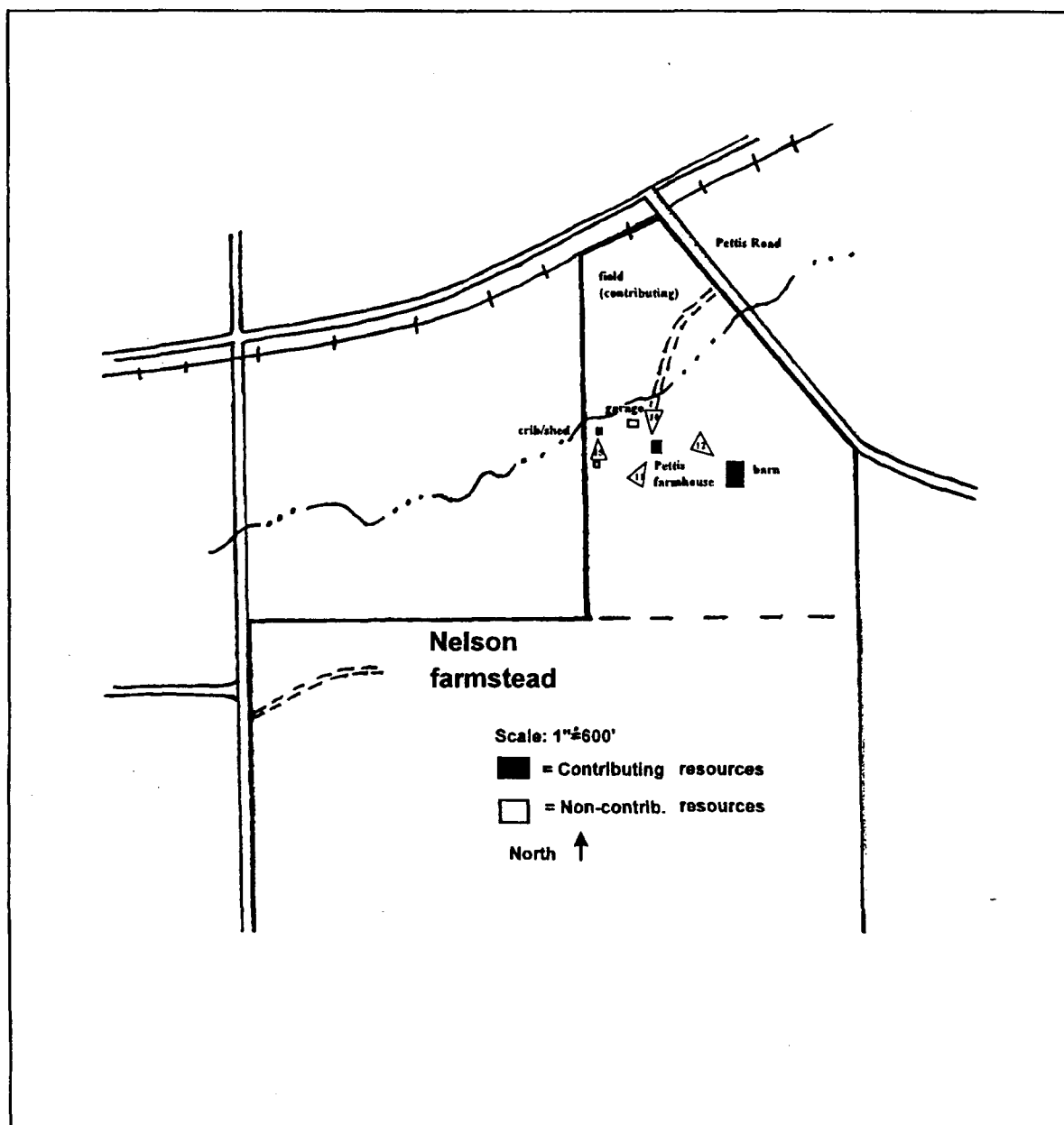


Figure 3. Site and Photo Map--detail, Pettis Farmstead

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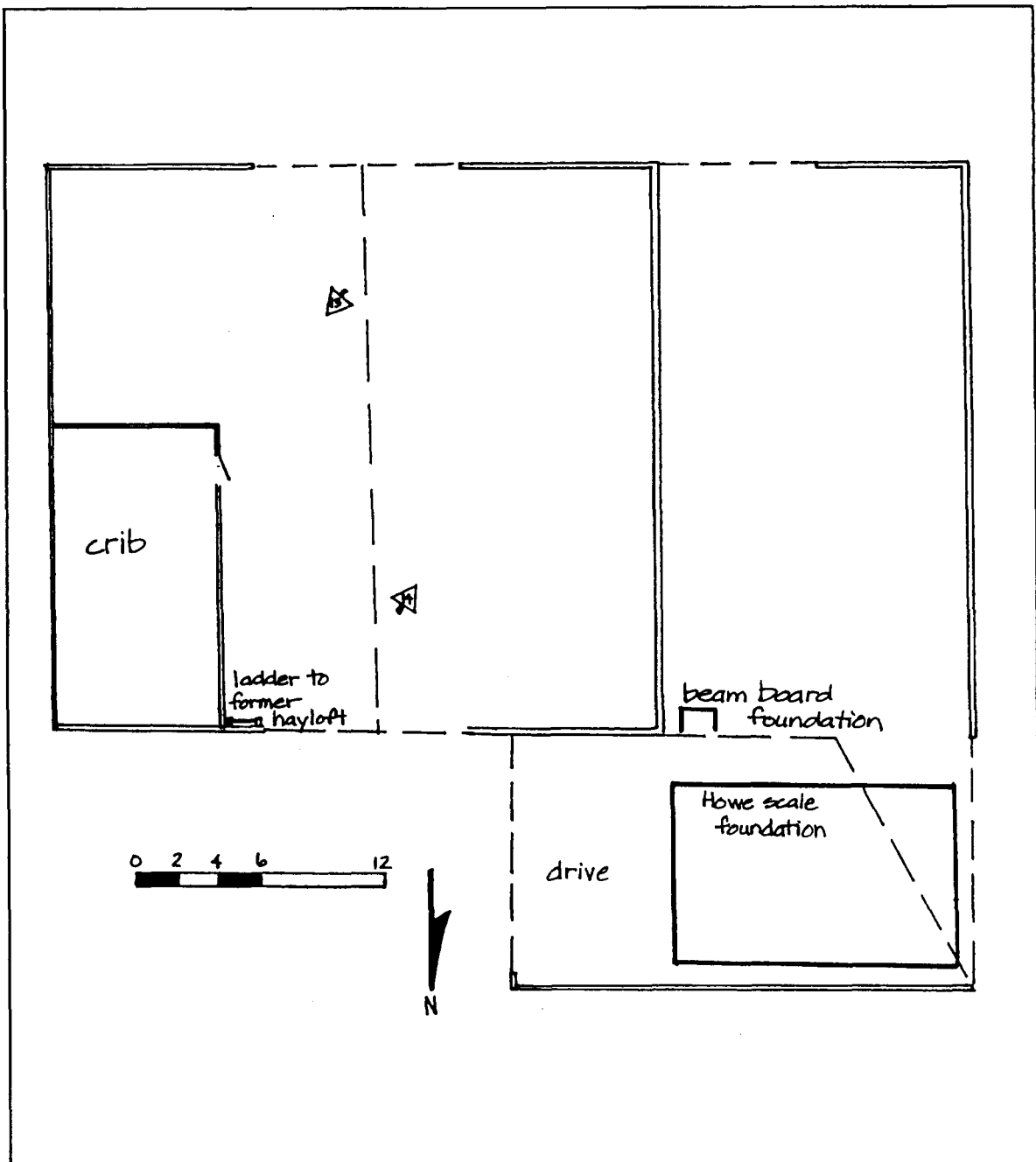


Figure 4 Pettis barn Floorplan and Photo Map.

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Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District
Buchanan County, Missouri

SUMMARY: The Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District, located at 3412 Pettis Road and 4401 Ajax Road in St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri, is significant under Criterion A in the areas of AGRICULTURE and ETHNIC HERITAGE: EUROPEAN. In *agriculture*, the history of the Nelson and Pettis farmsteads is representative of the changes which have occurred with single-family farming over the years in Missouri. Throughout the district's long association with members of a single family, the farmsteads illustrate the different periods of Missouri's agricultural development. The Nelsons and their relatives struggled at first to cultivate enough produce and livestock to serve their families' needs. This period of struggle was followed by one of prosperity as their farm methods became more efficient. This prosperity allowed them to increase their land holdings. The large families typical of the era, however, often complicated the passing down of an intact farmstead from one generation to the next, and changes in agricultural practices made small to mid-sized farming operations obsolete. Illustrating this is the fact that in 1880 there were 2,446 farms in Buchanan County, but in 1992 only 754. There were only sixty-three farms in Buchanan County that totalled between 140-79 acres in 1992.¹ The Nelson and Pettis Farmsteads Historic District is a rare example of a family farm which has not only remained in family hands for more than 145 years, but which has continued to serve as a functional agricultural enterprise in spite of increased pressure from surrounding development. In *ethnic heritage*, the historic district represents those parcels which are historically associated with Peter Nelson and family and which retain their integrity. Nelson was primarily responsible for the large group of Norwegian immigrants choosing and settling in this section of Buchanan County, even though the land was the principal lure. Following a guide written by Johan Reinert Reiersen, Nelson and others selected the St. Joseph area based on favorable reports of the land for agricultural pursuits. The group which settled here was the largest and most successful group of Norwegian immigrants in Missouri, and the largest found between Texas and Wisconsin. The prospect of land ownership was a powerful draw for the "land-poor" Norwegians. The Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District are the last remaining intact agricultural lands and buildings which are associated with the Peter Nelson colony of Norwegian immigrants. The period of significance extends from 1847, when Peter Nelson and family arrived in St. Joseph, acquired their first tract of land (which included the present boundary of the Nelson farmstead), and began their agricultural cultivation of these sites through 1945, the arbitrary

¹U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Agriculture: Missouri State and County Data*, Geographic Area Series, Part 25 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), 258.

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cut-off for National Register eligibility. The nominated historic district is presently threatened by a proposed highway project.

NARRATIVE: Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven (Peter Nelson's name at the time of his immigration to Missouri), was born at Kiland, Norway on June 10, 1794. The Nelsons, who came to Buchanan County in 1847, constituted part of a larger wave of Norwegian immigration to the United States in the 1840s. Immigration had begun as a trickle two decades earlier in 1821, when Cleng Peerson, "The Father of Norwegian Immigration to America," sailed to America on behalf of the Quakers. Finding the looked-for opportunities for religious freedom and economic security in the new land, Peerson encouraged emigration. The first colony of fifty-three Norwegians settled in New York in 1825 but did not prosper, and Peerson returned to America to look for better places to settle. At his recommendation, Norwegian colonies settled in Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri during the period of 1837-47.²

By the 1840s Norway was enduring economic, political, and religious difficulties. In contrast, letters home from Norwegian settlers in the United States told of large, level expanses of fertile and inexpensive land, and a democratic country free from class differences and religious persecution. The opportunity to own what in Norwegian terms was a huge farm became a powerful draw for dissatisfied Norwegians.³ Due to their country's size and population, very few Norwegians were in a position to inherit any sizable amounts of land. The "American fever," which had assumed "something of the character of a mass movement," was fed not only by letters home from settlers, but by

²Institute of Texan Cultures, *The Norwegian Texans*, The Texians and the Texans Series (San Antonio: University of Texas, 1971), 2.

³Ingrid Semmingsen, *Norway to America: A History of Migration*, trans. Einar Haugen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), 121-22, 126-27; and Ingrid Semmingsen, "Emigration and the Image of America in Europe," in *Immigration and American History*, ed. Henry Steele Commager (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961), 33, 36.

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newspaper articles promoting emigration.⁴ All of these letters and articles emphasized the opportunities for farmers and land ownership.

During this period, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven was a successful ship chandler and boat-builder and was living in a "fine old house" on the water's edge at Vestre Haave. Various family accounts also indicate that he had previously been a fruit farmer at Dolholt. He grafted a variety of pears still referred to today at Dolholt pears. The particularly persuasive pro-emigration editorials of Johan Reinert Reiersen, a newspaper editor in the nearby southern coastal town of Kristiansand, apparently helped convince Nielsen Kalvehaven to emigrate to America. Like Reiersen, he resented the prevailing class snobbery and high taxes in Norway, and the government's disregard for farmers. His primary impetus for emigrating, however, was basically conservative: economic security for his children.⁵ In 1843 he and a like-minded "interlocking kinship network of solid farm families scattered over the whole coastal region" paid Reiersen to travel to America to obtain more specific information on where to settle.⁶

In the winter of 1843-44, Reiersen traveled through Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, and the Republic of Texas. He published his findings in *Pathfinder for Norwegian Immigrants*, which provided the concrete information Nelson and his group needed in order to plan their

⁴Frank G. Nelson, foreword to *Pathfinder for Norwegian Emigrants* by Johan Reinert Reiersen, trans. Frank G. Nelson (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1981), viii.

⁵Nelson, introduction to *Pathfinder*, 24. In 1848 Peter Nelson wrote to his son-in-law in Norway of the favorable social conditions in America. He stated that "Everyone here dresses like a gentleman, and you see no difference between a farmer and a government official; they are all equal here and a plain man's son is just as likely to be an official as the President's Class and birth do not count here." Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven, Buchanan County, Missouri, to O.M. Dannevig, Norway, 19 July 1848, in Frank G. Nelson, "Following the Pathfinder: A Norwegian's Account of Western Missouri in 1848," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 32 (January 1975): 115. Nelson had Americanized his name but apparently used his Norwegian name when writing family.

⁶Two other main backers of the group besides Nielsen Kalvehaven were his cousins Osuld Nielsen Enge and Anders Nielsen Holte, well-to-do farmers and community leaders. Nelson, introduction to *Pathfinder*, 23.

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move. The publication in fact constituted the single most comprehensive source of information about the New World. In it, Reiersen discussed America's geography, natural resources, agricultural economy, commerce, mining, and state government, and described existing Norwegian settlements. He restated earlier directives, which included settling in groups to preserve Norwegian identity, determining the destination in advance, and creating a comprehensive travel plan.⁷ Some information was presented on various job and apprenticeship opportunities, but by far the majority of his book focused on information geared towards farmers. More specifically, he advised that travelers arrive at their ultimate destination in April to allow sufficient time to select land, and to plow and sow a few acres to provide food for the autumn. He warned that it would be necessary to allow time for construction of a house, and much of the land in America was unsettled. Reiersen even outlined the optimum route, which consisted of sailing to Le Havre, France and then to New Orleans, taking a steamboat up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, then boarding a steamer to the desired site.⁸ He declared it "neither my desire nor within my ability to decide just where a future Norwegian should be in the pioneer states of America," but did argue that "In my opinion, our emigrant fellow countrymen have settled too far north . . . where they have to put up with the miseries and inconveniences of a long, cold winter."⁹ He held Texas in especially high regard, but in Missouri recommended portions of Platte, Andrew, Osage, Bates, and Van Buren counties.¹⁰ Except for the fact that Reiersen did not specifically mention nearby Buchanan County, it will be seen that Nelson followed Reiersen's advice very closely.

Nelson organized a large party of Norwegians interested in immigrating to America. Family accounts maintain that future playwright Henrik Ibsen, then a druggist, outfitted the group with medical supplies for the trip. The colony left Grimstad, Norway, on the *Grethe Louise* September 14, 1846, and sailed to Le Havre, France. From Le Havre they sailed for eight weeks, landing in New Orleans on December 30, 1846. After two and one-half months in New Orleans some of the group headed to Wisconsin; Nielsen Kalvehaven's group embarked for St. Louis via river boat. Some members of the party elected to remain

⁷Ibid., 20.

⁸Reiersen, *Pathfinder*, 205.

⁹Ibid., 208-09.

¹⁰Ibid., 213-14.

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in that city. Nielsen Kalvehaven and the remaining group of 51 continued westward, arriving at Robidoux's Landing in St. Joseph on April 14, 1847, the ideal time according to Reiersen. They settled in the St. Joseph area because, as he stated in a letter home, "This was as far as the steamboats went and we, like them, had no desire to travel farther."¹¹ His cousin Osul Nielsen Enge gave a slightly different account of the party's decision in a letter home in 1848. He commented that while traveling through Missouri, the group was advised that the St. Joseph area was the best place in the state to settle because of the fertile soil and the access to good markets.¹² Most of the original party that landed in New Orleans, as well as others who came from southern Norway in the next few years, settled in and around St. Joseph in both Kansas and Missouri.¹³

It was the soil itself, in fact, which led Peter Nelson to select these tracts of land for settling. Nelson immediately recognized the high quality of soil upon his arrival in the St. Joseph area, noting that it is "very fertile and brings forth in rich abundance almost everything one sows, without being manured."¹⁴ Enge also found it "marvelous the way things grow." Nelson apparently found this tract superior even among the other good tracts, because he waited until he found a tract "with as good soil as possible."¹⁵ Nelson also noted, particularly in regards to his hemp crop:

Hemp demands the best and finest soil if it is to be profitable, and one reckons on half a ton to the acre in good years. . . . We were very lucky to have a good place to settle, not only as far as the fertility of the soil is concerned, but also in commercial respects. . . . Four or five railroads are going to run here, and in addition, the fertile soil here is causing several

¹¹Nielsen Kalvehaven in "Following the Pathfinder," 111.

¹²Osul Nielsen Enge, Buchanan County, Missouri, to "Family and friends," Eide, Norway, 16 July 1848, L [photocopy], p. 2, Private Collection, Mary Potter Nelson Guilmette, St. Joseph, MO.

¹³Nelson, "Following the Pathfinder," 110.

¹⁴Nielsen Kalvehaven in "Following the Pathfinder," 112.

¹⁵Ibid.

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wealthy people to move in to buy land and some to settle in the town. This is the reason for land prices rising, and they will continue to rise.¹⁶

Both farmsteads have "loess" soil. The word "loess" is derived from a German word meaning "loose," a highly fertile soil. Also known as "sugar soil" in reference to its fertility, loess is a "windblown, alluvial soil with a depth of 30 feet." This wind-deposited dust is made up of fine, angular grains composed of the common rock-forming minerals. Loess is found in only about ten percent of the earth's land surface. The largest deposits are located in northern China; the greatest accumulation in the United States occurs in the central Mississippi and Missouri Valley states.¹⁷ The alluvial soils located in the bottom lands along the many rivers and streams of northern Missouri are believed by some soil experts to be the most extensive in the nation. It is "exceptionally good parent material for soil, both because it is wonderfully tillable and has a rich supply of many nutrients".¹⁸ One-half of the soil in Buchanan County is brown loam loess.

The farmland in both Sections 26 and 27 consists primarily of Marshall and Contrary silt loam. Both are "sloping to strongly sloping, well-drained soils formed in loess on uplands."¹⁹ This combination of soil is found in approximately twenty-eight percent of the county. The Contrary soil in particular has a thick, dark surface layer containing a high content of organic matter. The Pettis tract also contains a small amount of Colo silty clay loam, found in "low areas in upland drainageways and on flood plains."²⁰ The areas containing these types of soil have typically been used for cultivated crops, hay, or pasture land, and all are suited to the growing of corn, soybeans, grain sorghum, and small grain. Nelson and Pettis both used the land for corn and to a lesser extent for small grains (barley, buckwheat, oats and rye).

¹⁶Copy of typewritten manuscript in private collection of Mary Nelson Guilmette, St. Joseph, Missouri.

¹⁷*Collier's Encyclopedia*, "Loess;" *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Loess."

¹⁸Gille, *Encyclopedia of Missouri*, 21.

¹⁹Soil Conservation Service, *Soil Survey*, 5 and colored fold-out map after page 143.

²⁰*Soil Survey*, 1989, 30.

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Although soil is technically a renewable resource, severe damage is difficult to repair because of the slow rate of soil-forming processes. After the period of drought and soil erosion in the 1930s, which resulted in this nation's "Dust Bowl", the Soils Conservation Service was established in 1933 to aid in the management of private lands. Beginning in 1935 intensive efforts were made by both federal and state governments to develop adequate programs for soil conservation and rehabilitation. Soil management, which is the basis of scientific agriculture, has evolved to include six essential practices: proper tillage; maintenance of a proper supply of organic matter in the soil; maintenance of a proper nutrient supply; control of soil pollution; maintenance of the correct soil acidity; and control of erosion.²¹ These practices have been undertaken at the Nelson farmstead for decades.

Ethnic Heritage

Perhaps because Buchanan county had not specifically been promoted by Reiersen, the fifty-two immigrants constituted the only significant settlement of Norwegians in Buchanan County.²² Nielsen Enge noted that there "were no Norwegians here before we arrived, only one Dane who arrived last autumn."²³ Their group also appears to be the only Norwegian settlement of any size or importance in the state.²⁴ The one previous Norwegian colony in Missouri had been established in Shelby County by Cleng Peerson in 1837. After only a few years, most of the by-then impoverished immigrants deserted the area.²⁵ Thereafter, most Norwegian immigrants settled further north in Iowa, Wisconsin,

²¹"Soil Management, *Microsoft Encarta* (n.p.: Funk & Wagnall's Corporation, 1993).

²²Norway as a whole provided only a negligible number of immigrants to Missouri. In 1860, of the 13.6 percent of the state's foreign-born population, fifty-five percent were German. Irish were the next most numerous. The numbers of other foreign immigrants, particularly Norwegians, remained very small. Perry McCandless, *A History of Missouri: 1820 to 1860*, The Missouri Sesquicentennial History Series, ed. William E. Parrish, Vol. 2, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 40-41.

²³Letter, 3.

²⁴Frank G. Nelson, in fact, maintains that the group formed "the nucleus of the only significant Norwegian colony between Iowa and Texas." Introduction to *Pathfinder*, 48.

²⁵Odd S. Lovoll, *The Promise of America: A History of the Norwegian-American People* (Minneapolis: University Press for the Norwegian-American Historical Association,

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Minnesota, and the Dakotas. The relatively sparse settlement of Norwegians in the southern states, and in Missouri in particular, has primarily been attributed to the presence of slavery in those areas. Norwegians typically felt a deep aversion for this institution.²⁶

In their early years in Buchanan County, the Norwegian settlers in the Nielsen Kalvehaven group appear to have followed Reiersen's directive to maintain their Norwegian identity. They followed the widespread Scandinavian custom of marrying their fellow immigrants.²⁷ Many of these immigrants settled on or around the Nielsen Kalvehaven farm, as a glance at the names in the 1877 *Atlas of Buchanan County* attests. Nielsen Enge also noted that the settlers followed the Norwegian methods of household spinning and weaving.²⁸ In addition, the Nielsen Kalvehaven family (who changed their name to Nelson during their first year in Buchanan County) was instrumental in the founding of a small Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran church. Early services were held on Nelson's property as well as on his daughter's to the south, and were conducted in Norwegian. The first pastor was a Norwegian from the Norwegian Synod of the Lutheran Church. These immigrants, referred to as the Peter Nelson colony of Lutherans in a church history, became members of the First English Lutheran Church when it was established in St. Joseph in 1894.²⁹ Except for these early practices, the Nelsons and their fellow immigrants quickly assimilated into American culture. They followed, as will be shown, the agricultural practices common to the area. The Nelson settlement as a whole is representative of the successful resettlement of Norwegians in Missouri and the United States, for whom the lure of owning farm land was the impetus for their immigration.

1984), 80.

²⁶Ibid., 76; and Leola Nelson Bergmann, *Americans from Norway*, The Peoples of America Series, ed. Louis Adamic (Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1950), 67.

²⁷Until 1920 about ninety percent of Norwegian-born immigrants married others who were fully or partly Norwegian. Semmingsen, *Norway to America*, 132.

²⁸Letter, 8.

²⁹Irma Z. Middaugh and Katherine M. Nelson, *First Lutheran Church: The First One Hundred Years, 1894-1994* (N.p.: Artcrafts Engraving Company, 1995), 3, 4.

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Nelson was representative not only of Norwegian emigrants of his period, but also of the many homesteaders who settled in the Platte Purchase territory after it became part of the state of Missouri in 1837. This triangle of land lay just northwest of what had previously been the state line and encompassed Platte, Buchanan, Andrew, Holt, Nodaway, and Atchison Counties. The area had formerly been reserved for the Sac, Fox, and Iowa Indian tribes, but after 1837 the Indians were forced to move to territory farther west.³⁰ The land was then surveyed and divided into 640-acre sections. The population grew rapidly as new settlers took advantage of the opportunity to apply for quarter-sections of 160 acres and pay for them on credit at \$1.25 an acre. This growth contributed to the transformation of St. Joseph from a fur-trading post to a city in 1843. The new city had become the county seat the year before the Nelsons arrived. St. Joseph grew even more quickly in the late 1840s as it became a popular outfitting post for travelers headed for the California Gold Rush. The population grew from eight hundred in 1846 to 3,460 in 1850.³¹ At this point in its history, St. Joseph was one of the busiest places in the country.

Nelson and Pettis Farmsteads

By the time the Nelson group arrived, much of the land near St. Joseph had been claimed or sold. Rather than embarking on a "costly and difficult" quest for the free land they had hoped for, the immigrants chose to stay and purchase readily available land from speculators and from those headed for the western frontier.³² Shortly after arriving in Buchanan County, a number of the families in the Nelson party had purchased partially cultivated land complete with buildings about six miles from St. Joseph. Peter Nelson's cousin Nielsen Enge, for example, bought 160 acres approximately seven miles south-southeast of St. Joseph. The partly cultivated acreage contained a house and stable.³³ Nelson, cautious and discriminating, took longer to choose a site. The family rented quarters for several months while Peter examined a number of tracts, explaining later that

³⁰McCandless, *History of Missouri*, 117.

³¹Logan, *Old St. Jo*, 44.

³²Nielsen Kalvehaven in "Following the "Pathfinder," 112.

³³Ibid.; and Nielsen Enge Letter, 2. Nielsen Enge noted that "a lot of people . . . wanted to sell as they wanted to move to Origion [sic]. Over here people move to Origion like people in Norway want to go to America."

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I hesitated several times, but that was only to be able to choose the best. For although the soil is fertile everywhere, still there is a great difference between one tract and another. I was anxious to buy where land was for sale, as near as town as possible, at as good a bargain as possible, and with as good soil as possible.³⁴

After much deliberation, Peter Nelson paid \$120 in 1847 for a quarter-section of the Platte Purchase located 2.5 miles southeast St. Joseph, which today constitutes the Nelson farmstead (minus ten acres). The tract Nelson chose had Marshall and Contrary silt loam, well-drained soils especially suited for corn and small grains.³⁵ The property came with a house and tilled land. The house must have been unsatisfactory, for Nelson bought a finished, one-room log house with a lean-to and moved it to the site, supplementing it with a wash house. Family sources believe that the log house was located near the current family cemetery, and was used for community meetings and the early Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church services. Excavations for a cellar and well near the house followed soon after. Within the year, Nelson paid \$25 for the claim to an adjacent quarter-

³⁴Nielsen Kalvehaven, in "Following the Pathfinder," 11. Despite Nelson's preference for free, uncultivated land, the partial development of the land clearly provided an important advantage in site selection. As Clarence H. Danhof notes, the fertility of the soil and the desirability of the markets were easier to assess if the land were partially developed. Furthermore, such farms were more quickly productive and could save farmers years of work. *Change in Agriculture: The Northern United States, 1820-1870* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 126-27.

³⁵Soil Conservation Service, *Soil Survey of Buchanan County, Missouri* (N.p.: National Cooperative Soil Survey and U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1989), 5. It would have been difficult for Nelson to have made a truly disastrous choice. The St. Joseph area contained large quantities of easily tillable, nutrient-rich loess soil well-suited to the growing of wheat, corn, oats, and fruit. Frank H. Gille, ed., *Encyclopedia of Missouri*, Encyclopedia of the United States (St. Clair Shores, MI: Somerset Publishers, 1985), 21. Also known as "sugar soil" in reference to its fertility, "loess" (derived from a German word meaning "loose") is a windblown, alluvial soil made up of fine, angular grains of common rock-forming minerals. *Collier's Encyclopedia*, 1989 edition, s.v. "Loess," by Kenneth K. Landes; and *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1993 edition, s.v. "Loess."

Nelson was pleased to observe that the "soil is extremely fertile and produces a rich abundance of almost everything one sows without manure" and that the land was especially good for garden crops and fruit trees. In "Following the Pathfinder," 112, 114.

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section of land and \$500 for the claim to two quarter-sections containing a house and cultivated land. He now owned eight hundred acres of prairie and woodland--a considerable holding for a recent immigrant.

Nelson's first livestock purchases after arriving were typical for the period. He purchased a team of horses and a wagon for \$20, seven cows for \$69, two span of oxen for \$70, thirty-five swine for \$36, and forty-eight chickens and two turkeys for \$4.³⁶ Two more teams of oxen were added in the spring. The horses (not yet much used as motive power in farming) were probably used for transportation. The oxen served as draft animals, with Nelson using five or six yoke of oxen to pull the plow.³⁷ Oxen were "typical work animals of precommercial farming."³⁸ The hardy, low-maintenance animals matured rapidly, aged well, could pull heavy loads, and were easily trained. In old age they served as food for the family or could be sold for slaughter.³⁹ Hogs and cattle made profitable use of Nelson's corn and other grain crops. In addition to being sold for slaughter, the cows provided breeding stock, meat for the family, and dairy products for both consumption and sale. Hogs could also be sold, but at first were primarily used, in the form of salt pork, as a source of food.⁴⁰ Chickens and eggs were also both sold and eaten by the family.⁴¹

³⁶Nielsen Kalvehaven in "Following the Pathfinder," 112.

³⁷Ibid., 113. Nelson owned a smaller plow than his cousin Osul Nielsen Enge, who used a "huge plough drawn by 8-10 oxen." Letter, 6.

³⁸Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 141.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰David D. March comments that pioneer families consumed "prodigious quantities" of salt pork. *The History of Missouri*, Vol. 1 (New York and West Palm Beach: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1967), 631.

⁴¹Nielsen Kalvehaven in "Following the Pathfinder," 113-14. See also Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 125.

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Nelson's farm equipment purchases were also standard for the period. He paid \$26 for a wagon to go with the wheels brought from Norway, \$12 for a saddle, and \$14 for a plow (probably of steel). In the spring he added a number of smaller tools and implements.⁴²

From the 1830s through the 1860s, Missouri farms were only slowly evolving from self-sufficient operations to for-profit concerns that secondarily produced necessities for the family. Also up through the 1860s, Missouri was typical of the rest of country in seeing the rise of the "businessman-farmer," whose goal was to grow enough produce to sell, as well as the increasing division of labor and the use of labor-saving innovations.⁴³ Thus like nearly all first-year farmers, the Nelsons were barely able to provide food for themselves. The year was busy, but they suffered several hardships that hindered their progress. Nelson broke and sowed ten acres for wheat and twenty acres for corn, but he did not have time to split rails to build livestock pens and the free-ranging cattle and hogs ate his first corn and wheat crops. He and his son Jorgen (George) were often ill that winter and had to hire men to help; however, they still managed to cut nearly eight thousand rails needed to fence in forty-five acres of the land. Their hogs increased to more than a hundred head, a surplus that enabled them to sell some of them, but most of the pigs were too young to butcher.⁴⁴ The family supplemented its diet with the abundant wild fruits that grew nearby and with garden crops. Nelson hoped to raise enough to feed the family by fall of 1848, but expected to have little surplus to sell.⁴⁵

Nelson accepted the difficulties of the early years philosophically. He indicated that he was undergoing a typical "purgatory" through which all immigrants must pass due to the unfamiliar living conditions, methods of work, and language--a state further complicated for Nelson by his family's illness during most of that first year. Reiersen's book had warned, in language closely replicated by Nelson, that "Every pioneer must go through this natural

⁴²Nielsen Kalvehaven in "Following the Pathfinder," 113.

⁴³Sally McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth-Century America: Vernacular Design and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 57-58.

⁴⁴His cousin Nielsen Enge, who had settled three miles from Nelson, noted that pork was so cheap (two cents per pound according to Nelson) that it was more economical--and necessary--for immigrants to slaughter hogs for food rather than to sell them. Letter, 3.

⁴⁵Nielsen Kalvehaven in "Following the Pathfinder," 113-14.

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and inevitable experience . . . that tests their character and courage," and even predicted that "winter illnesses" would strike the farmers or their children.⁴⁶ Despite these hardships, Nelson wrote home that he and the other Norwegians in his party were well-satisfied with their new lives. He maintained that Johan Reiersen's favorable account of America "fits this place very well."⁴⁷

During the next two decades, Nelson continued to increase his farm lands and yields. His primary crops, typical for the region, were hemp, Indian corn, and wheat. The corn was generally used as fodder for livestock rather than for human consumption, and brought little on the market.⁴⁸ The land had already been planted in hemp when Nelson purchased it. Hemp, along with tobacco, was the main commercial plantation crop north of the Missouri River; Missouri ranked second in the nation in hemp production from 1840-60.⁴⁹ Like other small farmers throughout the country, he divided his farm labor throughout the year, alternating seed-time with harvest work. Nelson planted oats and barley in April, corn and hemp in May, and wheat in August and harvested the corn after Christmas.⁵⁰

This era saw the invention and increased use of mechanical agricultural machinery throughout the country. Missouri farmers only slowly adopted the farm implements and machinery that became available before 1860, however, and this also seems to be true of the Nelsons.⁵¹ They, like other Missouri farmers in the era, probably used steel plows, common and improved harrows, cultivators, and various types of seed sowers by 1860. Hay rakes, threshing machines, and reapers were expensive and considered less essential.⁵²

⁴⁶Reiersen, *Pathfinder*, 62.

⁴⁷Nielsen Kalvehaven in "Following the Pathfinder," 115-16.

⁴⁸Nielsen Enge, Letter, 4.

⁴⁹March, *History of Missouri*, 633.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 113.

⁵¹Mumford, "A Century of Missouri Agriculture," 284-85.

⁵²McCandless, *History of Missouri*, 46-47. See pages 41-48 for a discussion of agricultural practices in Missouri from 1820-60.

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In a letter home of 1848 Nelson noted that nearby farms had begun using threshing machines, and machines for breaking hemp.⁵³ He does not mention owning them in 1848, which would not have been expected given his short tenure on the homestead. Given the increasing amounts of hemp he produced and the labor-intensive nature of its harvest, however, he probably purchased or borrowed a hemp-breaking machine at some point.

In 1849, just two years after purchasing his claim, Nelson owned eighty improved plus 890 unimproved acres used to harvest wood. His \$750 worth of livestock now included a horse, five cows, six working oxen, thirty head of cattle, and thirty swine.⁵⁴

In 1853 Nelson owned 320 acres: one quarter in Section 34 and one quarter in Section 35. In May of the next year an acre of this land close to Nelson's house was designated as a family cemetery after daughter Sara died at age thirty. The family cemetery was a typical feature of the nineteenth century Midwestern agricultural landscape. Members of the Norwegian community who were related to Peter Nelson by either birth or marriage have been buried in the cemetery through the years. By 1855 he paid taxes on five 160-acre tracts, plus one tract of 46.95 acres in Section 4 Township 56 Range 36. According to family accounts, he also owned two slaves valued at \$2,000 in 1855, and four years later, four slaves valued at \$3,500. In owning slaves, Nelson was typical of farmers in the region, for increasing numbers of slaves were imported before the Civil War to support the plantation economy of the Missouri River valleys. Slaves were commonly used to farm hemp, which required the hard work of breaking hemp and removing the pith.⁵⁵ As a slaveholder, Nelson was apparently an exception among Norwegian immigrants. It must be kept in mind, however, that immigrants tended to adopt the practices of the areas in which they settled. Nearly all Norwegian immigrants settled in the northern states in which slavery was discouraged, and the settlers no doubt followed custom. In Missouri in the 1840s, settlers north of the Missouri River were primarily from northern states and therefore also tended not to be slaveholders.⁵⁶ Nelson, however, settled in a section of the state in which slavery was commonplace because of hemp production, and probably also

⁵³Nielsen Kalvehaven in "Following the Pathfinder," 114.

⁵⁴Agricultural Schedules for the State of Missouri, Buchanan County, 1850.

⁵⁵McCandless, *History of Missouri*, 60; and March, *History of Missouri*, 636.

⁵⁶McCandless, *History of Missouri*, 37.

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because homesteaders came primarily from the southern states, including Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Georgia.⁵⁷ It is likely that he merely adopted the practices of his locality. Two of Nelson's slaves reportedly fled one night with Nelson's horses, wagon, bacon, ham, and other provisions, but returned to the farm after the Civil War. The Nelsons evidently treated them well, perhaps even like family, for the freed slaves lived the remainder of their lives on the farm and were buried in the family cemetery.⁵⁸

By 1860 the sixty-six-year-old Nelson owned two hundred improved acres and eight hundred unimproved acres. The federal census for that year gives his real estate value as \$5,000, and his personal estate value as \$5,000.⁵⁹ The value of his farm implements and livestock had increased only by \$50 and \$25, respectively, from the previous decade, however. To his crop production he added two hundred bushels of oats (typically used for livestock feed), fifty bushels of Irish potatoes, eighty bushels of rye, and two tons of hay. His production of "dew rotted" hemp had increased from the five tons of 1850 to thirty-one tons.⁶⁰ To his livestock he added four mules and two more working oxen, but he owned one less milch cow and twenty less cattle. Mules were a common form of livestock during the period of pre-mechanized farm machinery because they were strong, could be used to pull or carry, could brave exposure to harsh weather, were relatively immune from disease,

⁵⁷1860 U.S. Census, Buchanan County, Missouri, National Archives Microfilm Series #M653, Roll 609. More than two thousand slaves lived in Buchanan County at the start of the Civil War, although less than ten percent of Missourians had slaves in 1860. Of those, fewer than thirty percent owned more than five slaves. History Publishing Co., *History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, Missouri* (St. Joseph: Midland Printing Co., 1915), 271; and March, *History of Missouri*, 812.

⁵⁸*Missouri Office of Historic Preservation Architectural/Historic Inventory Survey Form*, 29 August 1985.

⁵⁹Note: the census-taker recorded the real estate value \$50,000, undoubtedly a clerical error as his real estate worth ten years later is recorded at \$5,000.

⁶⁰Dew-rotted hemp was left in the field to decompose, making it less labor-intensive than processed, water-rotted hemp but also less valuable on the market. More than eighty percent of the hemp sold by Missourians was dew-rotted. March, *History of Missouri*, 635.

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and were easy to feed.⁶¹ The addition of mules could indicate that he had acquired some newer farm machinery, which used horses and mules rather than the slower oxen. At this date the census recorded only two grown children remaining living at the Nelson farmstead: his son-in-law, twenty-six-year-old "Goostev" [probably Gustav] and his twenty-six-year-old daughter M.C. [Maren Christine]. Maren Christine eventually married Frederick Weddle, a Norwegian settler who owned land nearby. Another daughter Laura also married a Norway native, Ole Stinson, who was a prosperous farmer in Center Township.⁶² In 1847 daughter Aaselle Elise had married James W. Pettis, a Prussian who had been on same ship to New Orleans as the Nelsons. The couple moved to the farm on the north which is part of the nominated historic district.

James W. Pettis traveled to the St. Joseph area about the same time as the Norwegian immigrants led by Peter Nelson.⁶³ According to family legend, the East Prussian man, whose original name was James Wilhelm Stofflagen, was second mate on the ship which carried the Nelsons from LeHavre to New Orleans in 1844-45. On the trip he fell in love with Peter's daughter Aaselle Elise. Since neither could speak the other's language, he purportedly courted her by throwing sticks at her. This tactic must have worked, for they married in New Orleans in March 1847. He is believed to have followed the group to Missouri on foot. The accounts of his name change to Pettis vary. Some accounts hold that he stole the passport of someone named "Peters," which he pronounced Pettis and took it as his official surname. Peter Nelson gave the newlyweds some of his land north of his farmhouse, of which the acreage remaining today is a portion. According to family accounts, there was a small house on the farmstead which pre-dated the Civil War, but the

⁶¹McCandless, *History of Missouri*, 50; and March, *History of Missouri*, 642. In other parts of the country, horses were taking the place of oxen. Compared to both mules and oxen, however, horses were more expensive and last practical to raise. They matured more slowly than oxen and were of little value once their working life was over; they were also more prone to injury and required greater care than either mules or oxen. Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 142. The expense of horses, and Missouri's status as a major mule producer in the mid-1800s, would seem to explain why the Nelson opted for mules.

⁶²Chris L. Rutt, *History of Buchanan County and the City of St. Joseph and Representative Citizens, 1826 to 1904* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1904), 439.

⁶³He is first listed in the 1850 census as James Wilhelm Peters. The name "Pettis" does not appear until the 1860 census.

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Pettis' built another larger home just south of the Burlington tracks on the east side of the former Agency Road. This larger home burned down in 1915 or 1916 and was replaced by a much smaller house, which may be the present modified hall-and-parlor farmhouse.⁶⁴

By 1870 the aging Nelson had turned over forty improved and sixty unimproved acres to his thirty-seven-year-old son George, who had returned to live at the farm.⁶⁵ George, born in 1830, was sixteen when the family came to Missouri. He had gone to California in 1853 for the Gold Rush and worked there in "mining" before returning to St. Joseph in 1861. A contemporary history of St. Joseph described George Nelson's farm as containing one hundred acres "all of which is well improved."⁶⁶

Peter himself owned only forty improved and forty unimproved acres in 1870, and by this time seems to have divided his costs in half with George. George owned only two horses, so must have used his father's mules and oxen and helped in the production of winter wheat and oats. Peter's real estate worth is listed in the 1870 census as \$4,000, and George's as \$5,000; the former's personal value is \$3,300 and the latter's \$1,400. George may also have helped pay the wages for the Nelson's live-in, eighteen-year-old farm laborer, the son of foreign-born parents. George is listed as the only producer of Irish potatoes and of hemp. By this time, hemp had become a much less important crop for the family, with George producing only one ton instead of the thirty-one tons of 1860. The market for hemp had peaked in Missouri in 1860, then sharply declined during the Civil

⁶⁴Frank Nelson believes that the extant farmhouse is the original antebellum property, but the 1877 *Atlas of Buchanan County* does not show a house on the present site west of the road. The only house on James Pettis' land is east of the road. However, there may have been a small house on this section that was either not recorded because of its size or because of its secondary status. Additionally, by 1913 the *Atlas of Buchanan County* shows that the Pettis family only owned land west of the former Agency Road, including one parcel north of the Chicago & Burlington Railroad, where an early twentieth-century bungalow presently stands (perhaps the house built c. 1915).

⁶⁵The 1870 census lists Peter as head of household and George as a resident/family member.

⁶⁶*History of Buchanan County* (St. Joseph: St. Joseph Steam Printing Co., 1881; reprint, Cape Girardeau, MO: Ramfre Press, 1947), 838-39.

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War, never to fully recover.⁶⁷ In 1870 in Missouri, corn was the most important crop; four times as much of it was grown as oats, the second most important crop. Production of both oats and wheat climbed, a response to demand and the availability of transportation.⁶⁸ The Nelsons' production reflects the changing emphasis to a market-driven agricultural economy. By 1870 the Nelsons had planted apple trees, which were probably mostly for their own use as the \$15 harvest was fairly modest. The value of their farm produce that year totalled \$800.⁶⁹

George built the current brick house as a wedding present for his Norwegian-born wife, Osa Thompson, who was twenty years his junior. Osa's name, along with her sister's, is pencilled in the plaster of a second-floor bedroom wall with an 1871 date.⁷⁰ The house was constructed of soft brick fired on the site, and is an intact example of an I-house with simple, classical aspirations. The house hearkens back to pre-Civil War residences with its symmetrically arranged facade, simple cornice board, and lack of romantic era detailing. (see photos 3-5) The only area of exterior embellishment was found on the rear porch set within the ell. As seen in a 1903 photograph in Figure 5, the porch supports are simple chamfered posts with braces.

George sited the house on one of the highest points on the rolling farmland (the highest section was occupied by the cemetery in the southeast corner). The importance of proper siting of farmhouses and their accompanying farmyards had become increasingly evident to progressive farmers of the period. One aspect of establishing the most economically efficient farm possible was careful planning of the spatial arrangement of farm buildings. A central location, preferably on a slightly hilly spot, was promoted in several agricultural

⁶⁷March, *History of Missouri*, 636.

⁶⁸William E. Parrish, *A History of Missouri: 1860 to 1875*, The Missouri Sesquicentennial History Series, ed. William E. Parrish, Vol 3 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1973), 230.

⁶⁹*Agricultural Schedule*, 1870.

⁷⁰Physical evidence on the extant structure indicates that the wing and the I-house section were constructed at the same time.

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Figure 1. 1903 photograph of Nelson family farmstead, looking east.

publications as ideal.⁷¹ George was fortunate that the topography on the Nelson farmstead presented nearly such a location. Although on the northern edge, the hill containing the farmhouse is near the center of the east/west axis. This helped reduce travel across the agricultural fields, but primarily gave the farmer the ability to literally oversee his domain from all directions.

In 1870 the fifty-one-year-old Pettis owned 160 improved acres and forty unimproved (woodland) acres. The household consisted of his wife Eliza, forty-four, and his children Carrie, twenty-one; Bettie, nineteen; Frederick, seventeen; Paulinia [sic] fourteen, Peter A.,

⁷¹McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses*, 63-64.

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eight; Lavinia, five; James A., three; and Ada, two months. Pettis seems to have been more prosperous than the Nelsons at that date, for the cash value of farm was \$16,500, whereas the value of George and Peter Nelson's holdings combined totalled \$10,000. This may partly be explained by the family stories that Pettis operated a sawmill on the property. Pettis owned farm implements and machinery valued at \$250 in 1870. His livestock holdings were very similar to those of the Nelson's except that he owned two more oxen and nearly seventy more swine. He did not harvest hemp, but his crops were otherwise nearly identical to the Nelson's and thus were more typical of the rest of the state. He varied only in the output of some of the crops. He produced four hundred bushels of winter wheat to the Nelson's one hundred, four hundred bushels of oats to their 150, and \$50 worth of fruit to their \$15 worth. Because he was assisted by seventeen-year-old son Frederick, Pettis paid only \$200 for farm labor wages compared to the Nelson's combined \$600. His output that year was valued at \$1,485.⁷²

By the 1880s the national farm population was rapidly being outstripped by urban population growth. St. Joseph was entering its "Golden Age," and was rapidly growing.⁷³ However, the 1870s had been bad years for farming in Missouri. Throughout the country, farmers had to deal with industrialization and mechanization "which frequently confused them."⁷⁴ A plague of locusts decimated crops in 1875. The decade also had a drought which in turn was followed by too much rain. The nationwide financial panic of 1873 added to farmers' woes.⁷⁵ The Nelsons concentrated on maintaining their existing farm land holdings rather than acquiring more land. In 1880 Peter, eighty-six years old and now widowed, owned eighty improved and twenty unimproved woodland and forest lands, plus four hundred acres of other unimproved, nonwooded land. The value of his farm is listed as \$5,000, the same as twenty years ago. Farmland was apparently not appreciating in value as was the real estate in nearby St. Joseph. The worth of his implements is listed as only \$75, and his livestock as \$700. He recorded \$40 worth of building and repairs that year. Peter produced only four hundred bushels of Indian corn and ten bushels of apples

⁷²*Agricultural Schedule*, 1870.

⁷³Logan, *Old St. Jo*, 158.

⁷⁴Parrish, *A History of Missouri*, 232.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

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worth \$5. George, listed separately, has only one hundred improved, tilled acres, and a farm valued at \$2,500.⁷⁶

In 1880 the George Nelson household included his wife Osa, their children: five-year-old Irene, four-year-old Newton, two-year-old Thomas, Osa's twenty-two-year-old, unmarried sister Lizzie, and a twenty-seven-year-old farm laborer. George also does not appear to have invested heavily in modern farm machinery, for the value of his implements is listed at \$100. At \$400, his livestock was not much more than that of earlier decades on his father's farm, consisting of one horse, two mules, four milch cows, one bull, five calves, thirty swine, and 135 poultry.⁷⁷

In 1880 George Nelson produced 1,450 bushels of Indian corn, three tons of hemp, five hundred bushels of wheat, and twenty-five bushels of Irish potatoes. The regional variation in their production was hemp, apparently still a lucrative crop. The 1880 agricultural census shows that twenty-nine acres were planted in corn, twenty-three acres in wheat, one-half acre in potatoes, and one acre in sixty-two apple trees. Butter production is shown as two hundred pounds. Nelson paid \$500 in farm labor wages that year.

The Nelsons' failure to adopt the latest mechanical innovations of the era was typical of traditional farmers. "Acceptance of an innovation [by most farmers] tended to be limited and slow. To some extent the barriers to change were physical: many farmers, for example, did not have enough tilled acreage to justify the use of a new implement."⁷⁸ Another factor, and probably more likely in the case of the Nelsons, was "rigid adherence to routines founded on and sanctified by past experience."⁷⁹ Although their retention of traditional agricultural practices was typical, the Nelsons' production during the previous twenty years reflected in part the increasing specialization of Midwestern agriculture, with farmers relying more upon corn and winter wheat in particular.⁸⁰

⁷⁶Agricultural Schedules for the State of Missouri, Buchanan County, 1880.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 279.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses*, 94.

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By 1880 James Pettis, now sixty, was widowed. A twenty-five-year-old daughter tended the house, while his eighteen-year-old son Albert assisted with the farming.⁸¹ James, thirteen, and Ida, ten, still lived there, as did grandson Alonzo, seven. Also living with them was a twenty-three-year-old farm laborer of Danish parentage. That year Pettis farmed eighty improved acres and owned forty acres classified as permanent meadows/pastures/orchards. The value of his farm had decreased to \$5,000. He paid \$150 for farm labor, which he employed for 50 weeks that year.⁸²

Peter Nelson died in 1884 at age ninety. Family tradition holds that he spent his last five years living in his son's brick house, although the 1880 census still lists the two as having separate households. Nelson's sons and descendants continued to farm the land during the third stage of Missouri agriculture, from 1887-1920. This period was characterized by the even more widespread use of labor-saving machinery, the improvement of domestic animals, and the application of scientific methods of farming, all of which increased the value of the land.⁸³

Upon his father's death, George inherited twenty acres of the property and continued to live on the original farmstead. George's daughter Irene, who did not marry, inherited the house and twenty-eight acres upon her father's death in 1893. Eldest son Newton, a widower with three sons, lived on the farm with Irene. George Nelson's other three children inherited twenty-eight acres each. The Nelsons switched to dairy farming in this period with Newton in charge of the operation. Farm buildings (no longer extant) were constructed to serve the new focus on animal husbandry. The cellar east of the brick farmhouse, believed to have been built at the same time as the house, was now used for cooling milk and temporary storage of dairy products. For the first half of the twentieth century, the agricultural fields were used as pasture for the dairy herd, a shift which probably aided in the conservation of the farm's rich topsoil.

Between 1850-75 dairy operations in this country underwent mechanization. By 1910 centrifugal cream separators and testers, improved churns and other dairy apparatus had

⁸¹Probably the eight-year-old Peter A. listed in 1870.

⁸²Agricultural Schedules, 1880.

⁸³Mumford, "Century of Missouri Agriculture," 285.

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resulted in the transfer of cheese and butter-making from the farm to factories.⁸⁴ One of the major influences in the growth of dairy businesses in the early twentieth century was urban concentration. The farmers nearest metropolitan areas such as New York and Chicago monopolized this form of dairying. The dairy industry began to spread westward, when refrigerator cars could provide the necessary transportation to eastern markets.⁸⁵ While the Missouri dairy industry was not as big as other North Central states (Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota), the Nelsons were fortunate that their farm was not only near rail transportation, but close to an urban market as well.

By 1962 Newton had become too old to manage the Nelson farm and put his share up at public auction. George's son Harry, born in 1888, came back from Texas to outbid the would-be buyers and paid \$40,100 cash for the property. He moved back to the farm, where he lived for sixteen years. By this time the fields had reverted to crop land, with tenant farmers carrying out the agricultural operations, responding once again to changing market needs. Harry Nelson purchased the Pettis farmstead as well,

The long fallow period of the fields which occurred during the dairy period helped reduce the rate of soil erosion which has been so prevalent across the country. Current crop rotation practices also aid in reducing erosion, as well as help to maintain a proper supply of organic matter. Erosion is less severe with crops such as wheat, which cover the ground evenly, than with row crops. Some crops in the rotation help to build up the soil during their growth and, when plowed under, supply additional organic matter. Another method of erosion control involves tillage and mechanical erosion control practices. Contour farming requires that furrows follow the natural contours so that each individual furrow is level, thus retaining the water. Contour farming initially requires some grading, but does not alter the basic topography of the fields; rather it is a method of preserving the original topography and waterways. The Nelson agricultural fields have been preserved with contour farming practices since the 1970s. These farming practices have thus resulted in the high degree of integrity of these exceptionally well-conserved agricultural fields. The present farmer notes that the soil is unusual for its ability to be tilled even in wet weather.

⁸⁴Everett E. Edwards, "American Agriculture: the First 300 Years," in *Yearbook of Agriculture*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1940), 231.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 238.

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The fertility and workability of the soil is directly related to the land's function and area of significance--agriculture. The preserved condition of the soil is noteworthy as intensive cultivation and poor grazing management in Buchanan County has resulted in severe erosion of many of the soils. As much as 15 inches of topsoil has been lost, and in many areas, the soils are continuing to erode at an "excessive rate."⁸⁶

James W. Pettis died on Christmas day in 1898, and a year later his land was apportioned among some of his eleven children. James A. Pettis received two-sevenths of the east half of the northeast quarter of Section 27, a total of twenty-four acres. Another twelve acres was transferred to him in 1900.⁸⁷

Local tradition holds that a grain mill operated on the Pettis farm in the early twentieth century. Howe scales, used for measuring grain, are still found in the extension of the extant barn. The large barn was probably constructed in the twentieth century. A smaller crib/shed may have been constructed in the late nineteenth century, although conservative estimates place it c. 1900. It appears to have first served as a corn crib, due to the widely spaced, narrow wood slats which remain on the exterior of the framing. However, the wide flush boards on the interior indicate that it may have been later used as a granary. Small granaries such as this are typically associated with middle-sized farms with strong ethnic associations, especially German and Scandinavian.⁸⁸ Although the Pettis farm continued to function in the area of agriculture in the twentieth century, by this point it was becoming increasingly difficult to retain all of the land in family ownership. Road development took some of the farmstead, but the greatest obstacle was dividing the land among the numerous Pettis heirs. James W. Pettis has eleven children; his son James A. had fourteen. Nonetheless, the portion of the farmstead which was adjoining the Nelson farmstead remained in family ownership, and in agricultural use, throughout the twentieth century. In 1919, Orion Nelson, son of George Nelson, became the owner of the Pettis farmstead.

⁸⁶Ibid., 79.

⁸⁷These two section correspond to the thirty-six acres owned by James A. shown in the 1913 *Atlas of Buchanan County*.

⁸⁸Allen G. Noble, *Wood, Brick & Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape*, vol. 2: *Barns and Farm Structures* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), p. 104.

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From this point, the Pettis farmstead was apparently used for tenant farming. This practice continued after Harry Nelson bought the Pettis farmstead in the 1960s and the farming operations of the two farmsteads were combined. In the 1960s alfalfa and hay production were the primary source of farm income from the Pettis land. By 1967 the farmstead contained approximately twenty-seven acres, due partly to an extension of the former Agency Road (now renamed Pettis Road) through the northeast corner of the property.

During the twentieth century, farms were decreasing in number across the country, while at the same time were growing in size. Coupled with being more highly mechanized, farming supplied fewer economic opportunities. Many rural people moved off the farms, particularly in the years 1919-1950s.⁸⁹ From 1900-20, the number of farms in Missouri decreased from nearly 285,000 to approximately 263,000, due mainly to increase in farm size from consolidation.⁹⁰ The Nelson and Pettis families were anomalies, in that they were able to continue with their single-family agricultural practices, albeit with ever decreasing amounts of farm land.

In 1977 Harry Nelson deeded the combined farmsteads to his daughter, Mary Potter Nelson Guilmette, with the provision that she pass it on to her children. She and the present farmer, David Reed Jones, have instigated several soil conservation methods in order to preserve the rich loess soil of the agricultural fields. Mrs. Guilmette also oversaw the extensive rehabilitation of the Nelson farmhouse from 1975-92.

CONCLUSION: The Nelson family's use of the land for agricultural pursuits has lasted for nearly 150 years; their stewardship of the land and concern for the soil has remained constant through the generations as well. Today it is the last operating historic farm within the city limits of St. Joseph, and it remains profitable in spite of development pressure. The Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District is also the last remaining intact agricultural lands and buildings which are associated with the Peter Nelson colony of Norwegian immigrants. Included within the historic district are resources which retain a high degree of integrity: two simple farmhouses which represent different vernacular traditions from the

⁸⁹Richard S. Kirkendall, *A History of Missouri: 1919 to 1953*, The Missouri Sesquicentennial History Series, ed. William E. Parrish, Vol 5 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 16.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

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nineteenth century; two features typical of nineteenth century Midwestern farms--a family cemetery and a root cellar; two twentieth century farm buildings--the granary/animal shed and the Pettis barn; and lastly, the farm fields themselves, which are significant for the continuous agricultural history they represent. The resources are directly related to the areas of significance, and are represent the Nelson family involvement with agriculture from 1847 up through the present.⁹¹ The proposed historic district is presently threatened by a proposed highway project. The roadway design would separate the Nelson farmhouse from the cemetery, destroy the magnificent view over the farmstead, divide the agricultural fields into untillable triangular parcels, and prevent the farmer from accessing the fields. In short, it would destroy the integrity of the last working agricultural historic farmstead in St. Joseph.

⁹¹The arbitrary fifty-year cut-off date for eligibility limits the period of significance to 1945, although the agricultural use of the land has been continuous from 1847 through the present.

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Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District
Buchanan County, Missouri

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Section number 10 Page 42

Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District
Buchanan County, Missouri

UTM References

E. 15/345250/4398320

F. 15/345240/4397930

G. 15/344460/4397940

H. 15/344455/4398730

I. 15/344860/4398730

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: A 15 344860 4399140, B 15 344950 4399180, C 15 345155 4398910, D 15 345155 4398310, E 15 345250 4398320, F 15 345240 4397930, G 15 344460 4397940, H 344455 4398730, I 15 344860 4398730.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include the farmhouses, outbuildings, agricultural fields, and cemetery that have historically been part of the Nelson and Pettis farmsteads and that maintain their historic integrity. This presently includes approximately 177 acres, which have remained under family ownership and in agricultural use for over 145 years. The present district includes the original land purchases of Peter Nelson in 1847 for his own use, and those which were given/sold to his married daughter and her husband, James Pettis. Other parcels have been sold out of family hands and/or have been subdivided or lost to road construction, and have been excluded. However, the majority of these lands were purchased after 1847, and several hundred acres were never cultivated. The nominated district thus constitutes the intact portion of the original purchases of Peter Nelson and James Pettis.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Photographs Page 43

Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District
Buchanan County, Missouri

The following information is the same for each photograph:

Name of photographer: Deon Wolfenbarger

Location of original negative: 4401 Ajax Road; St. Joseph, MO 64503

The following information is the same for photographs 1-12:

Date of photograph: October 22, 1994

The following information is the same for photographs 13-15:

Date of photograph: January 12, 1995.

The remaining photograph information is arranged as follows:

Photograph number

Description of view indicating direction of camera (e.g., "Facing NW from cemetery")

1.
Nelson farmstead, looking NE from Ajax Road

2.
Nelson farmstead, looking west

3.
Facing east

4.
Facing NW

5.
Facing SW

6.
Cellar, non-contributing garage and bin, facing NE

7.
Facing SE towards cemetery from Nelson farmhouse

8.
Facing NW towards Nelson farmyard from cemetery

9.
Facing west from cemetery

10.
Facing SE towards Pettis farmhouse

11.
Facing NE towards Pettis farmhouse

12.
Facing SE towards Pettis barn

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Photographs Page 44

Nelson-Pettis Farmsteads Historic District
Buchanan County, Missouri

13.
Facing NE towards crib in Pettis barn.
14.
Facing SW, interior Pettis barn.
15.
Facing north, crib/shed Pettis farmstead.

On Loan to Toni Prawl, MoDOT, June 25, 1997

Slides -#1 Nelson Pettis Farmstead, Buchanan County
 -#10 " " " " "
 -#11 " " " " "
 -#19 " " " " "
 -#20 " " " " "

Photos #8 Nelson Pettis Farmstead, National Register Nomination, Site File

Text Page 30- Section 8, Nelson Pettis Farmstead, National Register
 Nomination, Site File: Copy made to replace original and put in file.


Topographic Map, NRHP Nomination, district UTM's: Copy made to
replace original and put in file

To be returned Historic Preservation Program by July 11, 1997



Allen Tatman 6/25/97

Allen Tatman, DNR HPP



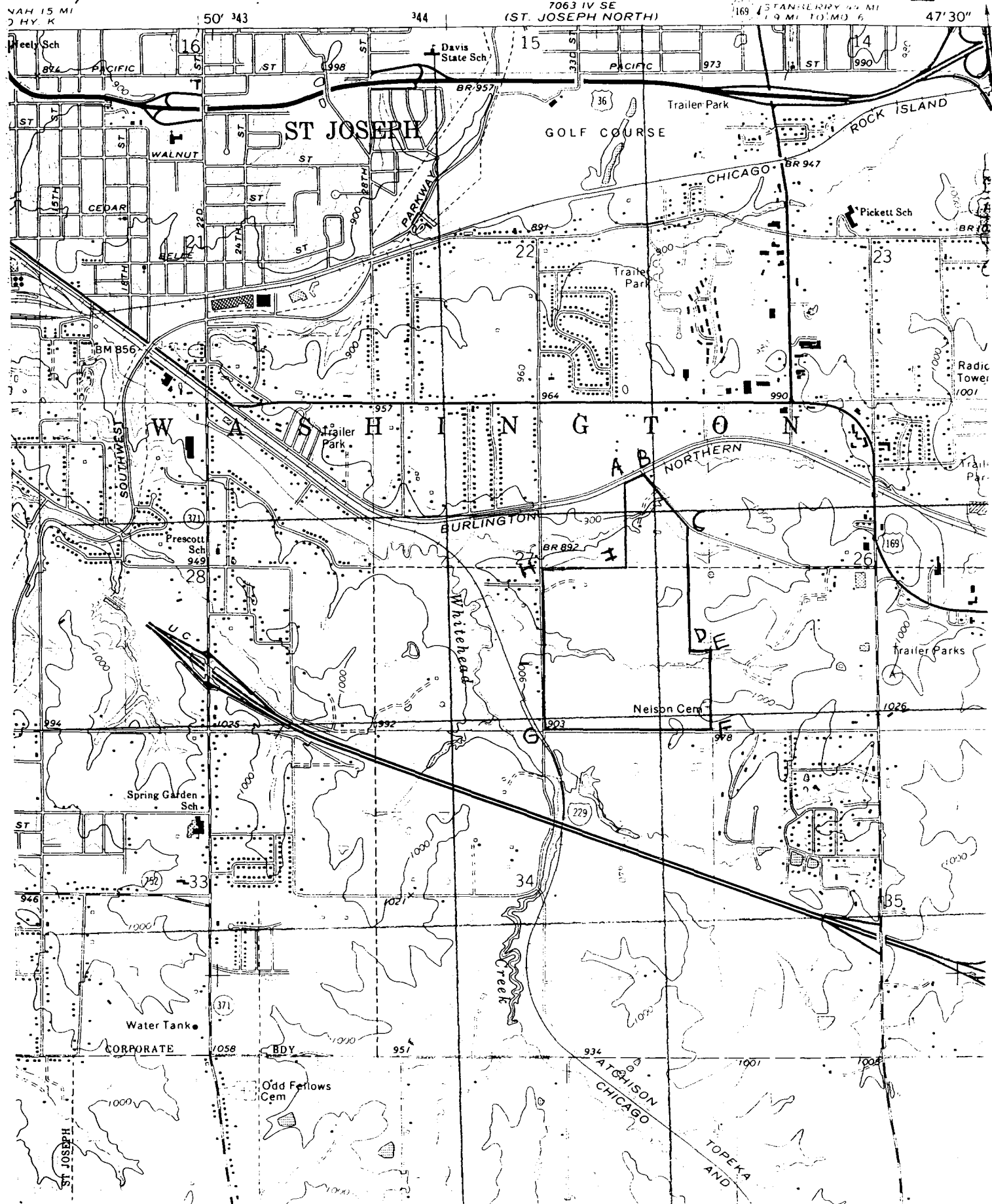
Toni Prawl 6/25/97

Toni Prawl, MoDOT

Nelson - Pattie Farmsteads Historic District St. Joseph, Buchanan Co. MO

A. 15/344860/4399140
B. 15/344950/4399180
C. 15/345155/4398910
D. 15/345155/4398310

E. 15/345250/4398320
F. 15/345240/4397930
G. 15/344460/4397140
H. 15/344455/4398730
I. 15/344860/4398730
STATE OF MISSOURI
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND WATER RESOURCES
WALLACE B. HOWE, STATE GEOLOGIST













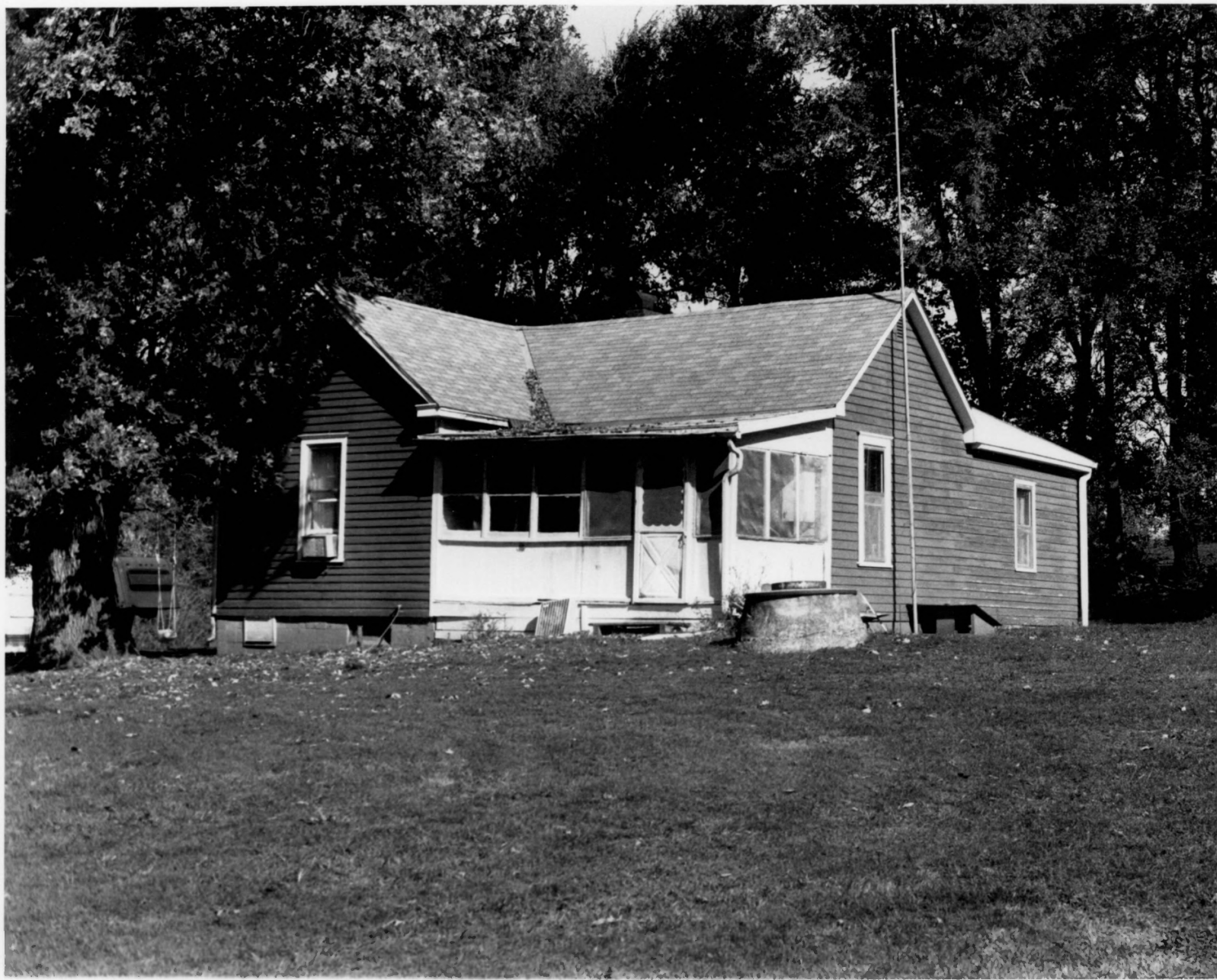




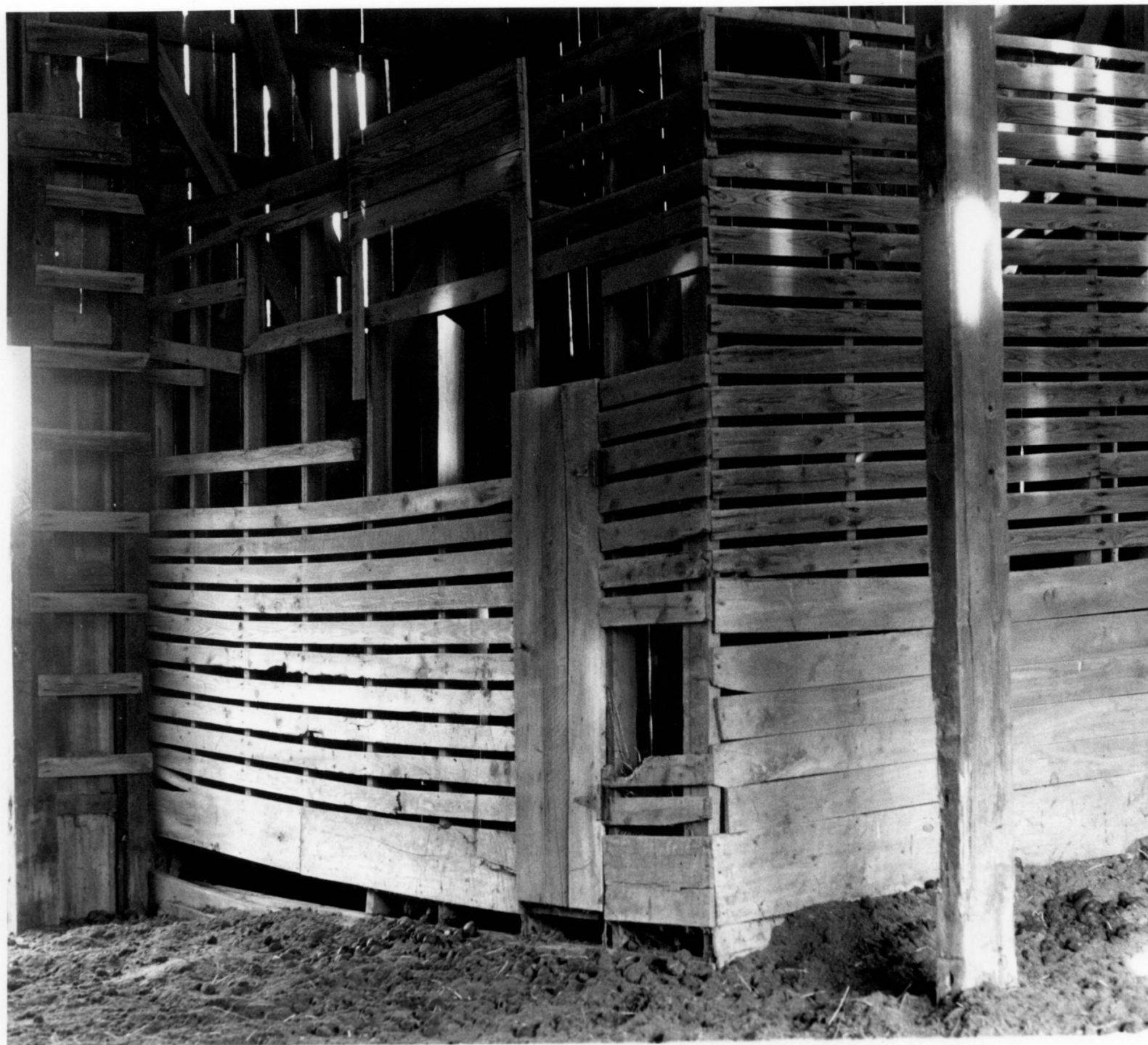
















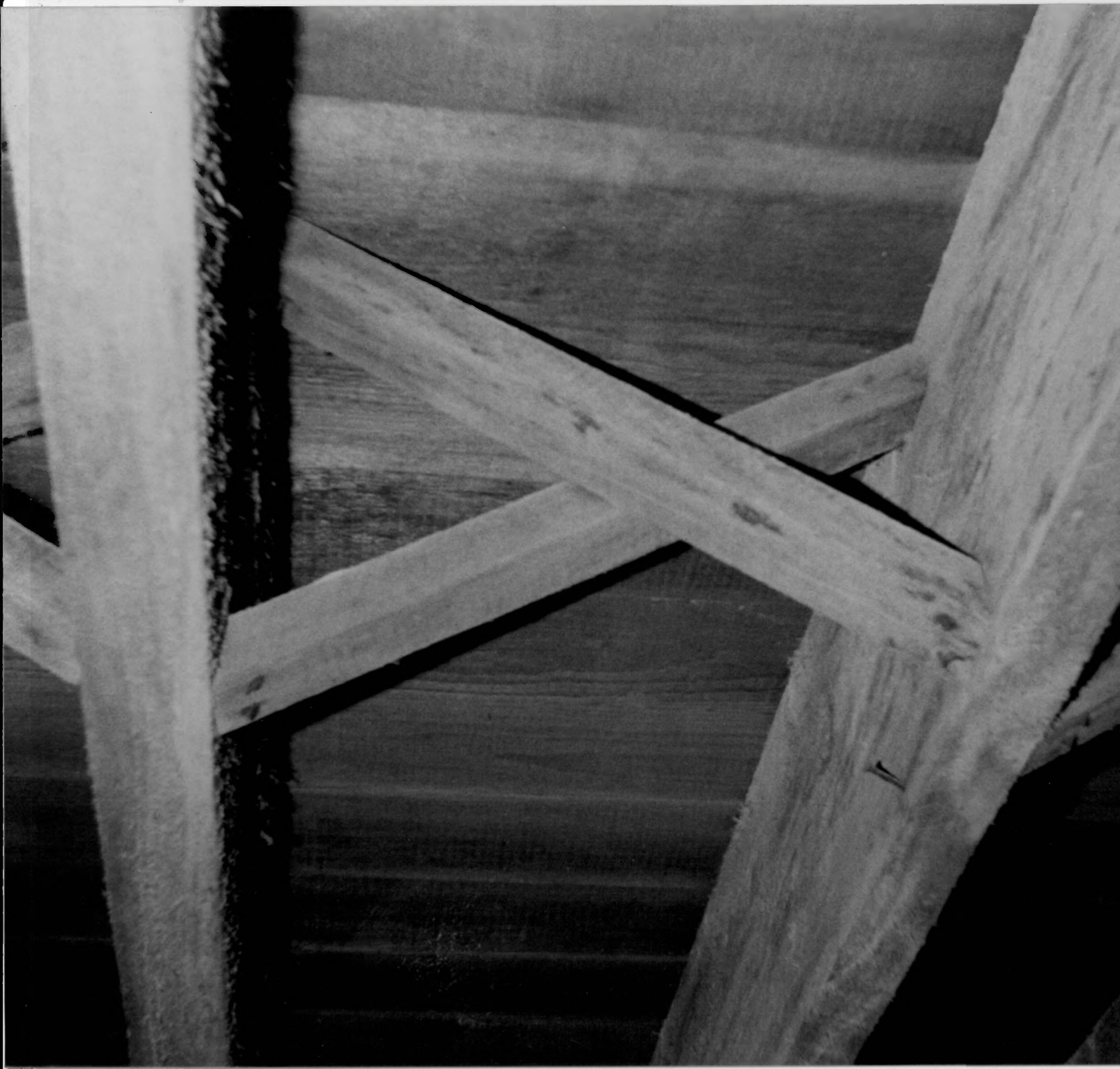
EXTRA
PHOTOS

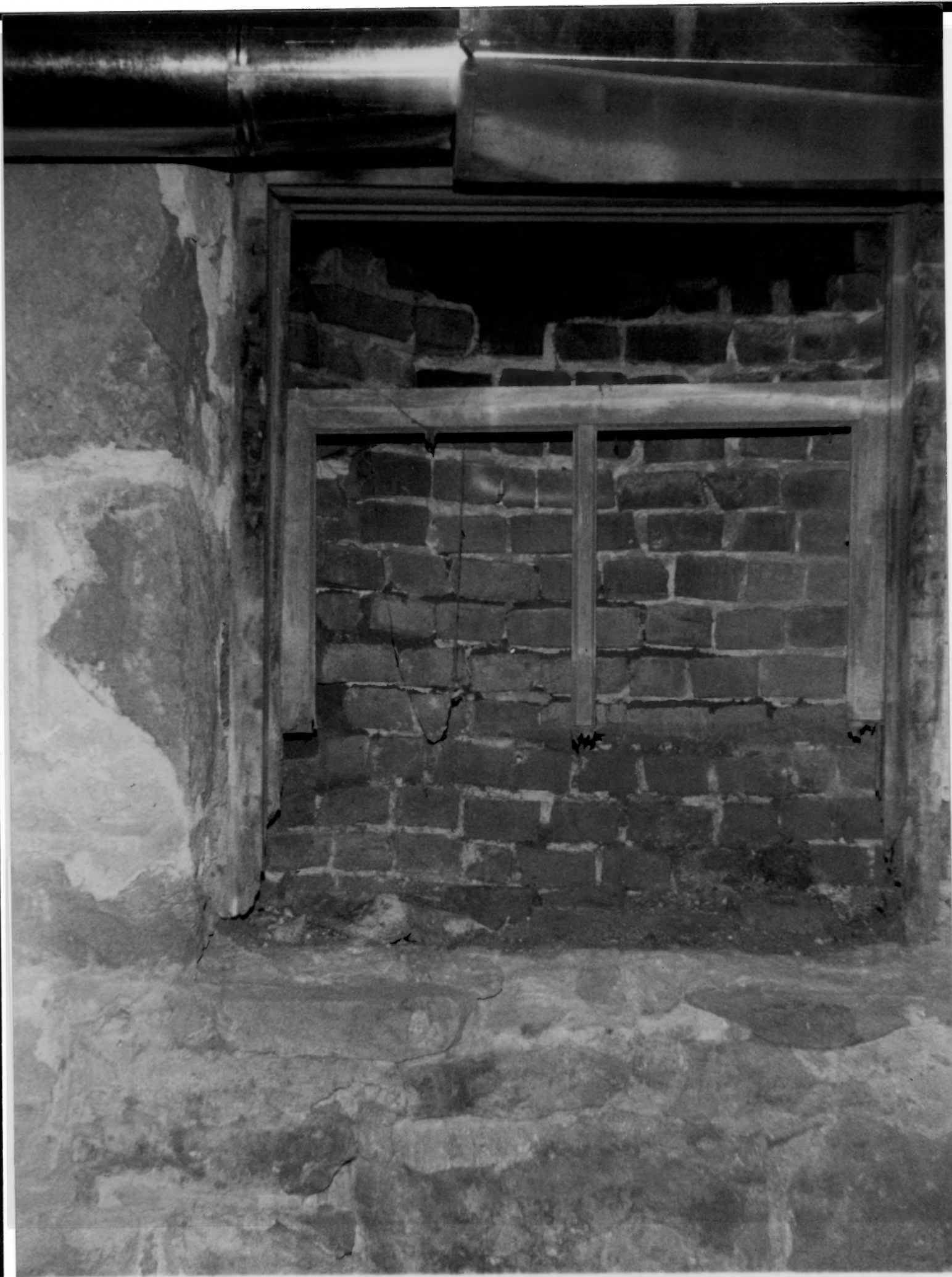










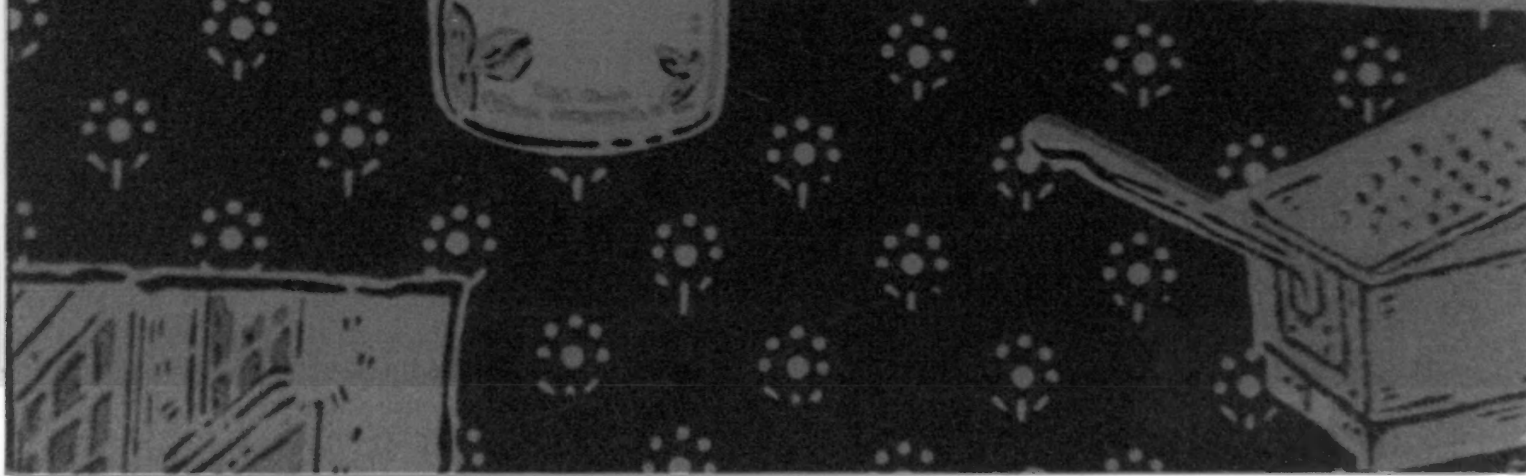
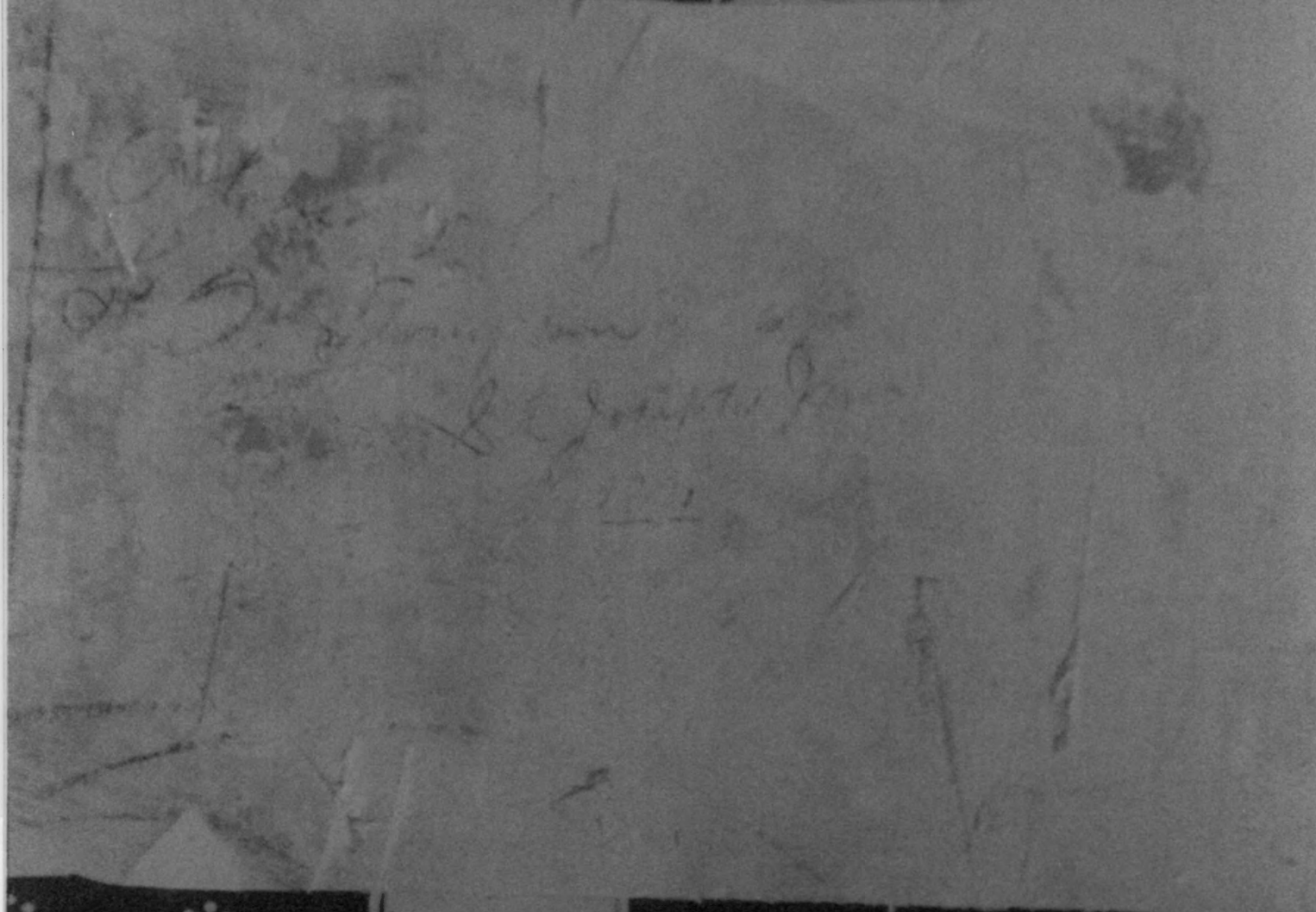
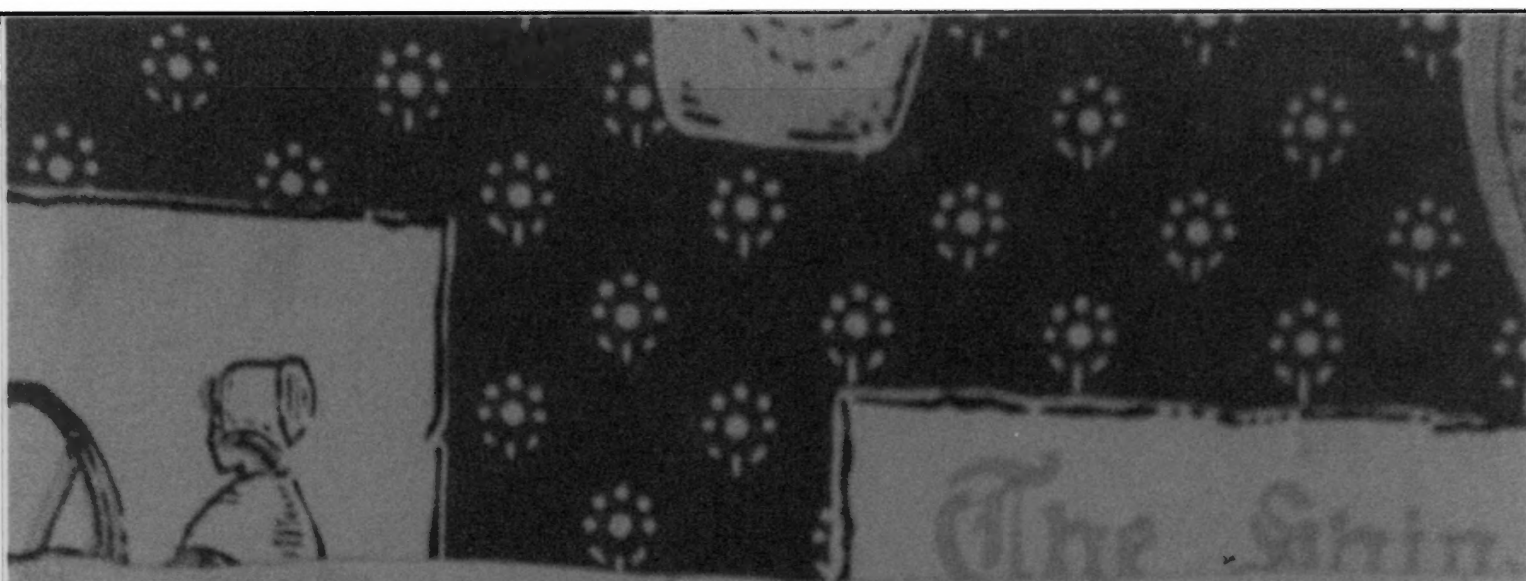
































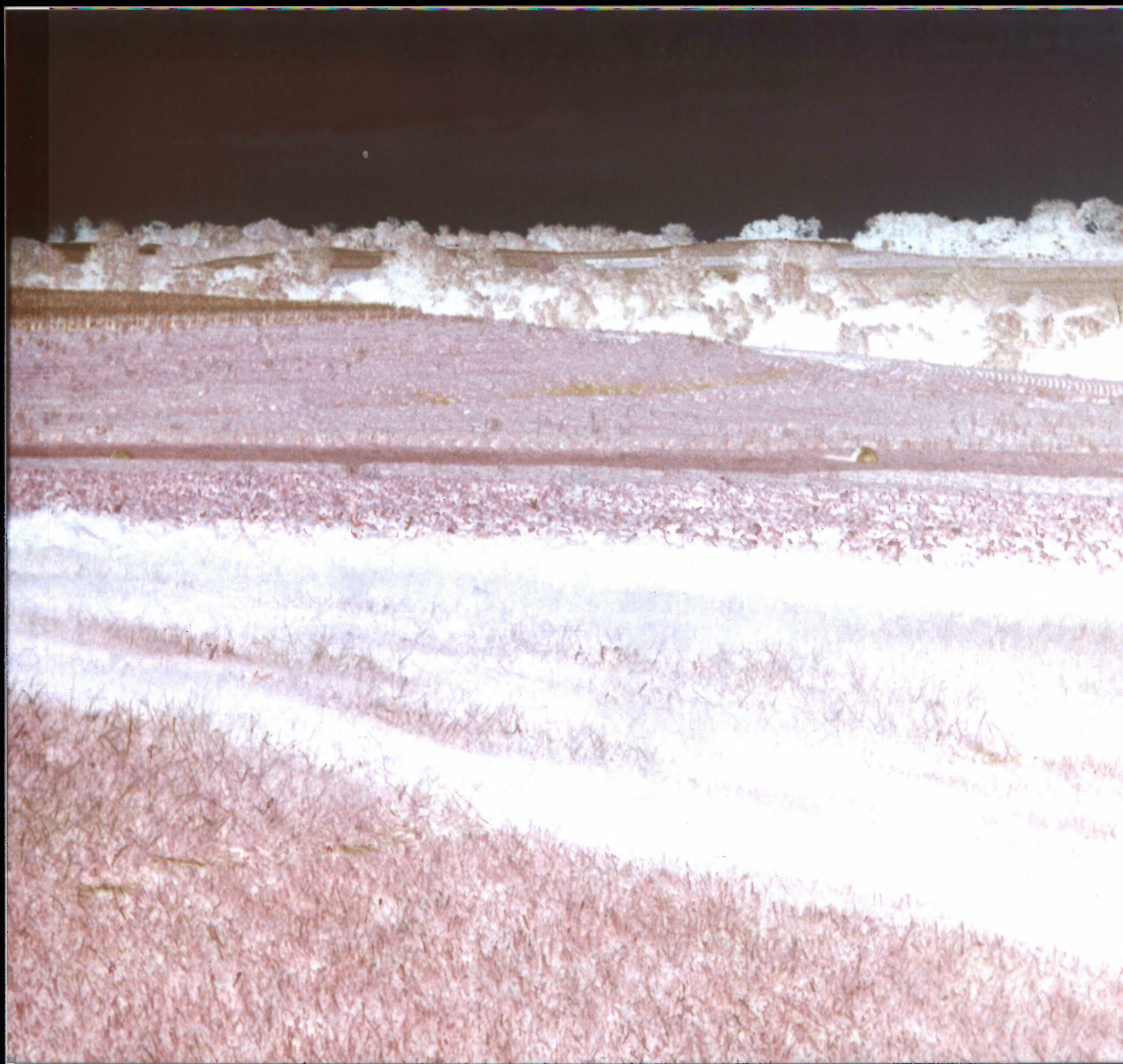














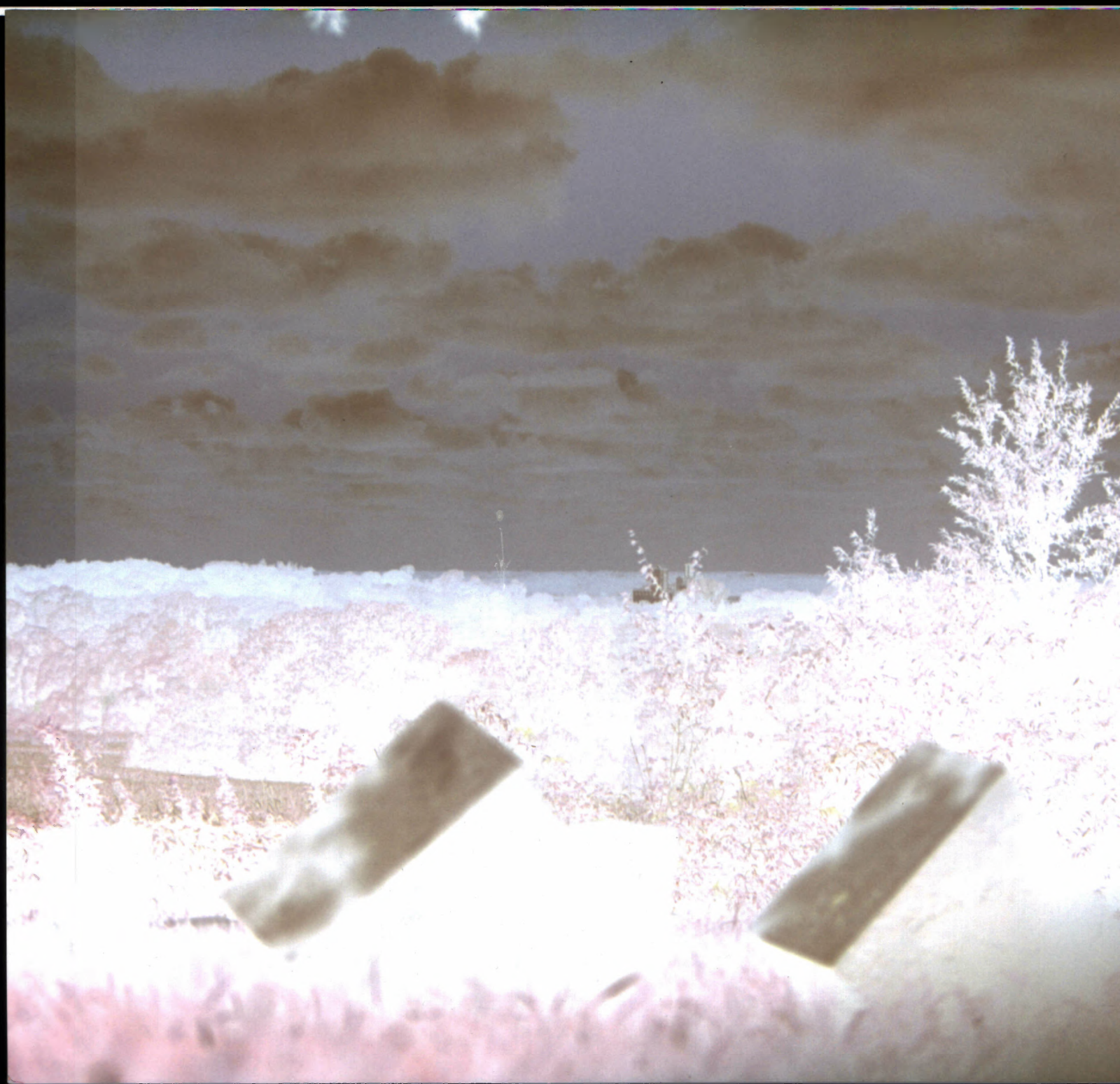


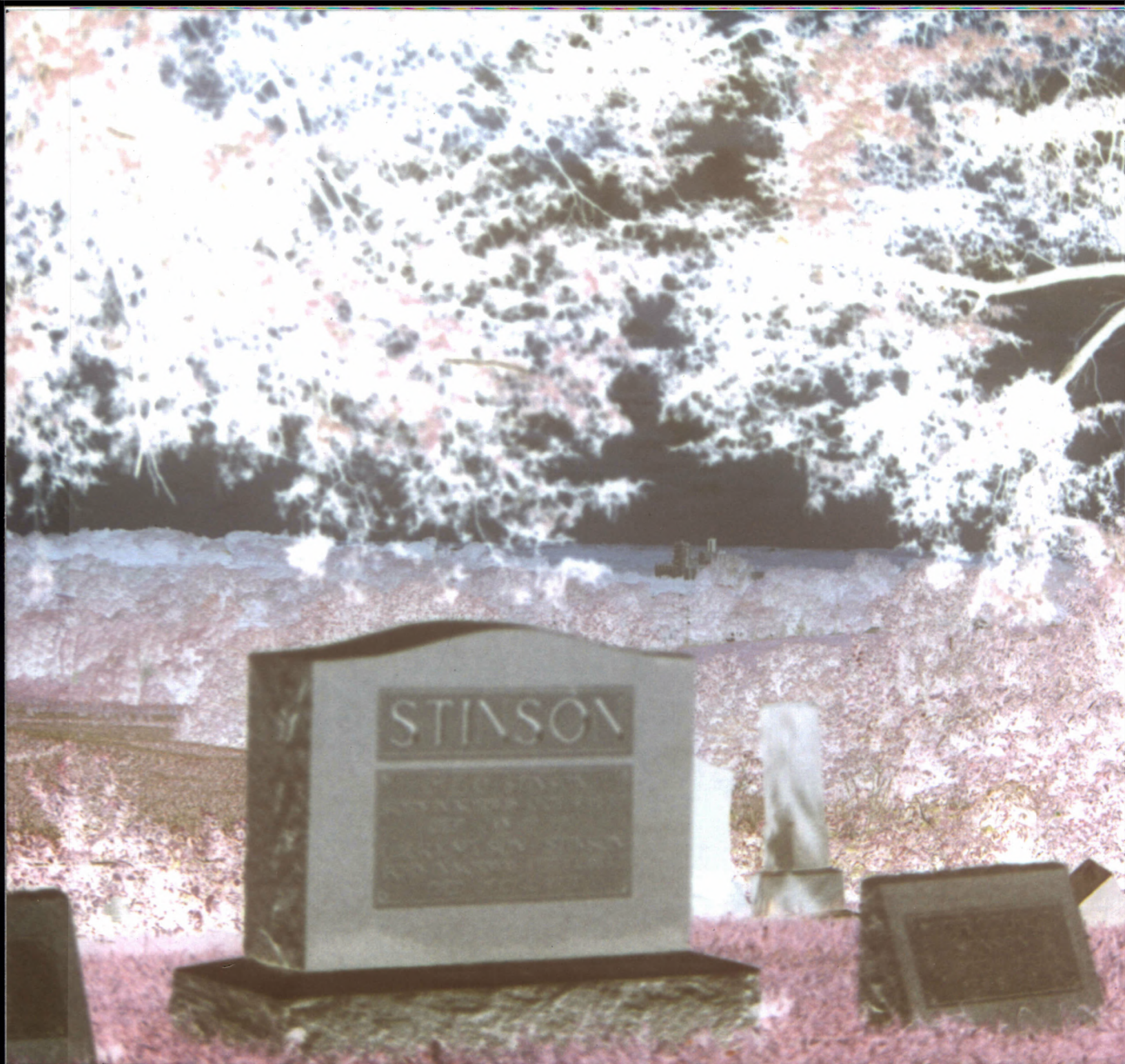














GEORGE A.
NELSON.
BORN IN
NORWAY.
APR. 18, 1830
DIED
JULY 25, 1883

OUR
FATHER & MOTHER
AT REST.

NELSON



